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INTERVENTION IN HYDERABAD

THERE are some five hundred Princely States in India. Yet only in two of them has the problem of assimilation either to India or Pakistan led to more than a momentary dispute. The main difficulties in Kashmir were the vacillation of the Prince, who refused to make up his mind until the last minute, and the fact that contiguity with both Dominions caused competing claims for possession. The great majority of the population is Muslim, which suggests that they might prefer association with Pakistan. However, the Hindu Maharajah finally and officially decided for accession to India; and India is able to point with some justification to the large pro-Congress following among the Muslims in that State. Consequently, there is no clear-cut case and a satisfactory settlement cannot now be reached there until the Uno Good Offices Commission succeeds in persuading the two Dominions to stop fighting, and conditions are sufficiently stable to allow of a plebiscite in which the wishes of the inhabitants can be discovered.

In Hyderabad the situation is vastly different. Right in the heart of India, with a dominantly Hindu population, it would be ludicrous to suggest that its Muslim ruler, supported by a tiny Muslim hierarchy, has either the moral right to accede to Pakistan, hundreds of miles away, or the capacity physically to sustain such an accession if it were accepted. Mr. Churchill and his friends make great play of the proposition that this great State (by which they mean His Exalted Highness the Nizam) is free to remain independent or to accede to either Dominion as it pleases. They add that, because the British Government stated this at the time of the transfer of power, we are now bound to guarantee the exercise of this choice. If we had given such a guarantee—which we did not—it could not have been fulfilled; and, if we had attempted to force this view on the Indian Government, we should have been guilty of an unwarrantable interference in the affairs of a sister Dominion.

The history of the British in India shows how much our power rested on the States. Some States were created, the others were maintained, for this purpose. Scattered all over the subcontinent, they represented conveniently stationed bastions of defence, and centres to which disaffection in other parts could be drawn off. Each State had its treaty obliging it to supply men and arms to the British Raj when needed. No Prince could retain his throne if he displeased the Viceroy, as the frequent depositions indicated. But, provided the Prince fitted in to the British pattern, he was guaranteed protection internally and externally. Most significant of all, no Prince, not even the Nizam, was permitted to conduct any sort of a foreign policy.

When the British left India, their control over, and their treaties with, the States would have lapsed automatically even without our categorical announcement to that effect. From then onwards the course which the Princes might follow has been no concern of ours—they were free to do as they pleased, as we said, but we added the hope that they would sensibly accede to India or Pakistan. We added that rider because the problems of the new rulers are the same as ours were. Whoever controls the Central Government in either Dominion must control the States or be the victim of recurring internal dissensions and dangerous rifts in the administrative structure. Sirdar Patel, the Indian Minister responsible for the States, saw this clearly, and skilfully and successfully directed his policy towards securing the adherence of the Princes.

He has only failed in Hyderabad. The Nizam, badly advised and egged on by the irresponsible backing of such wild supporters as Mr. Churchill (who, utterly ignorant of the nature of British rule in the past, now displays an even more splendid unawareness of the conditions of the present), decided on a bid for an independence he never had before. He began by trying to become a Dominion on his own account, and was baulked. He tried to buy a seaport to gain him an outlet to the sea, and could not. He was offered by Sirdar Patel an arrangement similar to the one he had with the British; and he hesitated, hoping yet to become a sovereign State. In the period of the standstill agreement, allowed for further reflection, he has encouraged the growth of a fanatical Muslim army sworn to crush the Hindu majority in the State, and to rule by terror. He has never shown the slightest willingness to establish even the semblance of democratic institutions, as the other States have done.

All this is behaviour the British would not have tolerated for two months. An army would have been despatched, order restored, the Nizam deposed, a successor found and warned to be on his good behaviour, and the trouble would have been settled promptly. The Indian Government have put up with the situation for a year. Can the British now blame them if they take the action, albeit tardily, that we would have taken long ago? If the Indian Government hesitated now, then indeed they would justify the jibe that they were incompetent to succeed us.

Defence and Man-power

The Government's decision to retain for three months beyond their normal release date all national service men who are due for release in the next few months, but have not already left their units, was not unexpected. It is a direct and obvious consequence of the sudden call for more troops in Malaya and the reluctance of the Chiefs of Staff, in the present situation of international tension, to reduce the strength either of the occupation forces in Germany or of garrisons in the Middle East. The decision means that up to the end of this year the numbers in the armed forces will be about 80,000 higher than the strength scheduled in the Defence White Paper, issued last February. What is to happen after December remains to be seen. It would be extremely difficult to defer releases for a period longer than three months; but it is optimistic to imagine that the "situation," either in Europe or Malaya, will have been cleared up by the end of this year. The Government apparently is placing reliance on the success of a forthcoming campaign to accelerate recruitment both for the regular and auxiliary forces; and our long-term man-power needs for Defence will presumably be reviewed when the results of this recruiting drive are known. At the moment, more serious in its reactions on Britain's economic position is Mr. Morrison's announcement that production both of aircraft and army supplies is to be expanded. Before we drift blindly into a general policy of rearmament, the Government will have to do some hard thinking. With our straitened man-power resources and our precarious economic position, we must have a clear conception of the rôle we propose to play in any conceivable Third World War before yielding to the demands which all Chiefs of Staff invariably make for maximum numbers in uniform.

Dividing the Cake

The marriage of true European minds has at length been consummated in the revised apportionment of Marshall Aid on which the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation has agreed; but Mr. Harriman's insistence on the removal of impediments has been so firm that the ceremony wears somewhat the aspect of a gun-shot wedding. We set out below the amounts of gross aid which the chief beneficiaries are to receive, together with the dollar equivalents of the sums which the members of the Marshall Plan group are to contribute to, or receive from, each other. In addition to the nations listed, Norway and Denmark will each receive net aid of slightly over 100 million dollars, and there will be small net grants to Sweden, Turkey, Iceland, Eire and Trieste.

MILLION DOLLARS

	Gross Aid	Inter-member	Net Aid
France	989	+323	1,312
Britain	1,263	−282	981(a)
Italy	601	−20	581
Holland	496	+72	568
W. Germany	514	−9	505
Belgium	250	−207	43
Austria	217	+64	281
Greece	147	+77	224

(a) Less the equivalent of $200 million in sterling balances which Britain will unfreeze in favour of Marshall Plan countries.

The figures indicate that Britain will receive (net) a good deal less assistance to her balance of payments than had been expected in the first year of the Marshall Plan. In principle, the scheme is open to the criticisms that it will tend to encourage member countries, not to increase their own production, but to extract as much as they can in free imports from other member States; and that the distribution of European trade which is thus created, on the basis of Marshall dollars, may be distorted and artificial. There will doubtless, too, be complaints from some quarters that Western Germany will be required to make a singularly small contribution to Western Union economy, even if the process of dismantling of plant is discontinued. On the other hand, it is difficult to deny that France, at any rate for this year, stands in greatest need of external assistance; and those who believe in the advantages of Western Union can hardly complain if the Americans have made their aid conditional on the recipients contributing to, or drawing from, the common pool according to their needs. They are, however, entitled to protest that they will have little say in the use made of credits.

Dismantling

The Government's decision to join with the French in resisting the American proposal that the dismantling programme should be reviewed is extremely short-sighted. If, as it not unreasonable, the European nations still desire to extract reparations from Germany, it is surely clear that with the inclusion of Western Germany in the Marshall Plan, reparations from current production become far more appropriate than reparations by the crude method of dismantling. There can, of course, be no question of permitting Germany to retain armament factories. But a great number of the plants due for demolition are not armaments factories, but belong to the secondary classification of "dangerous industries," that is industries which can easily be switched to war-time production. Such plants, if left *in situ*, could (under proper safeguards) be usefully employed on peaceful production, and a percentage of the output allocated for reparations. There is a second reason why Mr. Bevin should welcome a review of the policy. The ugly facts about the methods employed in the dismantling of the German clock industry in the French Zone, revealed recently in these columns by Mr. Crossman, indicate that here at least German allegations about the activities of trade associations behind the scenes were fully justified. It was not merely Germany's war potential which was being dismantled, but her power to compete in the export market. Both the Prime Minister and Sir Stafford Cripps have given explicit assurances that British dismantling policy is in no way influenced by the natural desire of British industrialists to eliminate German competition, and it is clear that in this particular case lobbying was conducted not in London but in Paris. Yet the established fact that such lobbying took place makes it probable that similar motives have been at work in the British Zone as well. A full investigation should be carried out, and Mr. Bevin would be well advised to welcome the American proposal that, in the meanwhile, all dismantling should be suspended, except of armament factories.

The Italian Colonies

The formalities of reaching a deadlock at the Foreign Ministers' Conference having been duly fulfilled, the issue of the Italian colonies will now be debated by the Assembly of the United Nations. There should be little difficulty in reaching agreement on Somaliland, which is strategically unimportant; but it has long been clear that Tripoli and Cyrenaica, both of which, since their capture, have been under British Military Government, would arouse bitter disputes. Britain wishes to obtain sole trusteeship of both, but has only laid immediate claim to an enlarged Cyrenaica. This area, despite its grave deficiencies—it has neither an adequate port nor a water supply—is an essential alternative to Palestine as a Middle Eastern base, from which Egypt can be quickly reoccupied in the case of war. Tripoli contains airfields essential to the defence of the Mediterranean narrows. Both British claims are supported by the U.S.A., which is now using the Tripoli air-base in conjunction with airfields in Britain and Germany for "training flights." But this support cannot be vociferous in view of the large Italian vote which the President cannot afford to alienate in view of Mr. Dewey's recent pronouncement that Italy should get back all her colonies. Since there is no chance of obtaining either territory for herself, Russia, like Mr. Dewey, is backing the Italian claim. The French, on the other hand, support the Italian claim to Tripoli, while favouring British trusteeship in Libya. On the merits of the case the French are probably right. The British claim to Libya is reasonably strong, but an administration in Tripoli pledged to speedy Arab self-government would run into conflict with French North African policy. Moreover there are large Italian and Jewish populations in Tripoli whose existence would be seriously threatened by such a development. The differences between the Big Four are further complicated by the attitude of the smaller Powers. Many Latin-American States would support the Far Eastern countries in strongly opposing sole British trusteeship. It is already accepted as certain by the State Department and the Foreign Office that the necessary two-thirds will be unobtainable. Anglo-American policy at the Assembly will therefore aim at preventing any decision being reached, and so ensuring, though somewhat precariously, the continuance of British rule in both territories.

"Truce Cabinet" in France

With the French balance of foreign payments greatly eased by the apportionment of this year's Marshall Aid, M. Queuille has succeeded in forming an administration headed by what Parisians have termed a "Truce Cabinet." But, though M.R.P., Socialists and Radicals have listened, for the moment, to the new Premier's appeal that they should "adopt an empirical attitude and shed the armour of party doctrine," it remains to be seen how the internal differences which destroyed M. Marie's government and frustrated the efforts of M. Schuman to form a coalition, will be overcome. Like his predecessor, M. Queuille promises economies in the military and civil budgets, fresh taxes, restriction of capital investment, the revision of State subsidies and reorganisation of the nationalised industries. His approach to the immediate problem of the trade unions' demands for higher wages has yet to be disclosed. Indeed, the chief novelty in his programme is his undertaking to revise the electoral law—a promise made, no doubt, with an eye to General de Gaulle's demands, in his present tour of the South, for an appeal to the electorate. The drafting of the law, however, will not be easy. The M.R.P. adheres to its preference for proportional representation; the Radicals and the Right want single-member constituencies, and the Socialists are reluctant to have the question of elections and electoral machinery raised at all.

Unesco at Sea

The plight of Unesco is a sorry comment on our times. This organisation, which was to "build the defences of peace in the minds of men" and, in the realm of ideas, to be above politics, has become involved in war and politics. By the decision of the Mexico City Conference, Unesco was supposed to hold this year's conference in Beirut, in November. Quite reasonably, Trygve Lie has pointed out that, apart from any physical risks, it is rather inconsistent for a U.N. specialised agency to be meeting in the Levant in a politico-military situation which the U.N. Security Council has failed to resolve. So an Extraordinary General Assembly of Unesco has been called together in Paris to decide whether (*a*) to persist with the original plans, (*b*) to meet, at the appointed date, in Geneva, (*c*) to assemble in Paris in December, or (*d*) to open in Paris in December and adjourn to Beirut in February. (Meet they must because they have to appoint Huxley's successor as Director-General.) Unesco, that ark of high hopes and human aspirations, deserved a better fate than that which has beset its infant years.

Harvests and Prices

Despite sadly "mixed" weather, the harvest in most of Britain seems likely to result in fair-to-middling yields. Meanwhile the United States is bringing home an all-time record crop of maize and a new-record crop of wheat, and there is confident talk of a coming fall not only in bread prices, but also in those of pork and poultry—but not of meat. The big question for us is whether the fall, if it comes, will prove to be a signal for a more general drop in American prices. Of this there are so far very few signs. The trend of retail prices is still upward; and nobody seems to expect that the Credit Control Bill recently passed by Congress will have any substantial effect. Instalment buying will involve the payment down of a rather larger starting deposit; but that is about all that is likely to happen just yet. Nevertheless, a fall in grain prices, even if it does not set the pace for a general movement, is a good deal better than nothing, from the standpoint of needy buyers in Europe and Asia; for it is certain to be reflected in the world's grain market. For American consumers it may not mean a great deal. High living costs in the United States are due much more to the very high prices of meat, milk and butter than to the price of bread; and there is no sign of disinflation there.

PARLIAMENT : The Extraordinary Session

Wednesday

RAYERS were over, and for a few moments while ey waited for Black Rod bearing His Majesty's mmons, Members had the opportunity of studyg each other's pallor and tan, acquired according to ste or opportunity in constituency parlours or under lediterranean suns before their recess was interpted. No one was in a very good mood. The frock ats and the City of London top hats on the Government front bench had a funereal elegance. And when e Speaker led the Commons from their Chamber the Royal Robing Room, not even the far-off silver nfare could make the procession seem anything but cortège. The Peers wore grave black. Solemnly, ey heard the shortest speech ever delivered from the Throne. "My Lords," said the King, "you've had !" (or words to that effect). The Lord Chancellor eceived a copy of the speech on bended knee. The King and Queen bowed at the obeisance of the Peers. nd the ceremony ended.

When the House resumed its business in the afteroon, the Speaker announced that "for greater acuracy" he had obtained and would read a copy of he Most Gracious Speech. This was greeted with a murmur of approval which had hardly finished before he Speaker finished, too. The essence of the King's Speech lay indeed in the single sentence that Parliament had been summoned to deal with the Bill to mend the Parliament Act, 1911. The movers of he Motion for the Address, Leslie and Symonds, had he task of making what at any time is a difficult speech, and concocting it from the thin ingredients of that single sentence. One senior Member who, in an earlier Parliament, moved a similar motion, vowed never to listen to a fellow-Member carrying out this duty, so paralysing were the symptoms which the occasion recalled. But both Leslie and Symonds dealt unfalteringly with their material, the one to make a solid Yorkshire Pudding of a speech, the other to make a bright soufflé.

It was natural that they should deal rather more with what was not in the Gracious Speech than with what was in it. Leslie, accepting according to convention the honour of moving the Address as a compliment to his constituency, made a detailed survey of the benefits it had enjoyed under a Labour Government. The Tories became restless; McKie rose on a point of order—an unusual interruption of such a speech—but was restrained by his Chief Whip. Symonds, the Member for the Borough of Cambridge, gave the House a scholarly and witty account of the relations between Town and University which must have been composed, half in the Library of the Commons and half in the Library of the Cambridge Union. He left the impression that somewhere in the course of his remarks he had dealt with the King's Speech.

Oliver Stanley and Herbert Morrison, the other speakers in this debate, offered a further contrast in style. Stanley, allusive, exact in phrase and carefully preparing his effects, entertained the House—including Morrison, his chief butt—with his protracted banter. Not even when he expressed with the general concurrence his regret at the Prime Minister's illness did he fail to associate it with a gibe at the Lord President. Only at a second glance could one observe that both Stanley and Morrison were smiling through clenched teeth.

At the end of Morrison's speech it became clear why he could not share fully in the light-hearted mood that had crept over the House. He knew that his peroration was not going to be a verbal romp; he had to announce on the Prime Minister's behalf the slow-down in demobilisation and new preparations for defence. The Lord President did not try to diminish the seriousness of the statement, nor in saying that it should not be received in a "panicky spirit" did he try to discourage a due anxiety—which the House clearly felt.

Members who had arrived at 11.0 o'clock with a sense of irritation began to feel at 4 o'clock that, whatever the virtue of the Parliament Bill, it was perhaps of value that in this ominous month the Commons should be in session to deal with the nation's affairs.

MAURICE EDELMAN

WAGES, PRICES AND INCENTIVES

AT last week's Trades Union Congress, the official front was successfully held, as far as the voting can be taken as a measure of the result. The malcontents who opposed the General Council on the issue of wage policy gained little more ground than they did last March. But, to achieve this defensive success, the General Council had to allow itself to be committed to a number of inconvenient instructions. The resolution which it agreed to accept, for fear of worse, pledged it to demand stronger control over prices and profits, and registered dissatisfaction with the Government's actual doings in these respects. Even Mr. Deakin, as spokesman of the Transport and General Workers, had to demand more effective controls as a necessary condition of continued restraint in pressing for higher wages. Moreover, everybody knew that the advance granted to the engineers would give the signal for a number of other urgent applications.

So the General Council, aided by the fact that a number of its leading critics were either Communists or "fellow-travellers," got away with it on condition of promising to press the Government harder to do—exactly what? Not to put a legal limit on profits—for that the General Council's spokesman categorically repudiated—but at any rate to insist on further measures to keep down prices and dividends. One speaker after another, from both sides, insisted that the working classes were feeling seriously the pinch of rising costs of living, and that, as Dame Loughlin said, prices and not rationing had come to be the effective limiting factor. The extent to which this has happened is not fully brought out by the new official cost of living index, because a good many of the things that have risen most in cost either do not figure in it, or get only a low "weight." But the July figure of 108 (it was 110 in June, before certain seasonal changes brought about a fall) as compared with 100 a year ago, is high enough to bear quite hardly on workers whose wages have not been increased. The total wage index for all workers shows a rise of only 6 per cent. since July, 1947. On the assumption that real wages ought not to be allowed to fall, there is a case for a fairly heavy crop of further advances.

The question is whether this assumption is to be accepted or not. Most of the Unions think it should be accepted, and are divided only on the question whether the desired result should be achieved by raising wages or by reducing prices. Now, as for prices, there are two main ways of keeping them down—by raising subsidies or by increasing the net-work of controls. There may be a third, if a consumers' revolt reduces demand; but this is likely to occur only in a very limited sphere just now. Even if a good many would-be purchasers are being choked off by rising prices, there are for most goods enough alternative buyers ready to buy more, as soon as there has been time to adjust supplies to the changes in demand. That leaves, for most things, only subsidies or controls.

In food subsidies the Government, because of higher sterling prices in the world market and of the need to shift sources of supply, is already paying out far more than it bargained for. As against this, it has made a saving by abolishing the textile subsidies, but only at the cost of focusing much discontent on the high cost of clothes, which, indeed, constitutes the most keenly felt grievance to-day. The Government will obviously oppose putting back the subsidies it has taken away, and will be very reluctant to increase food subsidies further. What then, of the possibility of more drastic price-controls? There are two difficulties. In the first place, the socialised industries have been instructed, as a matter of Government policy, to set out to pay their way; hence wage increases to miners and transport workers are passed on to the consumer. This is why, up to July, fuel and light had risen in price by nearly 11 per cent. over the past year. In the second place, it is very difficult, as Sir George Chester pointed out at the T.U.C., to reconcile full employment under capitalism with the effective limitation of either prices or profits. This is so because firms which differ greatly in efficiency have all to be kept in production; and this means that prices have to be high enough to cover the costs of the least efficient, plus enough profit to make production worth their while. The necessary consequence is that all the more efficient firms make windfall profits. Under really competitive conditions it would pay the latter to expand output so as to drive the "marginal" firms out of the market; but to-day this cannot happen, because the better firms cannot expand for lack of machinery or material allocations. Thus the conditions of shortage perpetuate inefficiency.

All the Government can do, short of socialisation, is to prevent the more efficient firms from distributing as dividends the windfall profits which they cannot be stopped from making. This, however, merely increases the market value of their shares, and thus engenders profit on capital instead of profit in dividends. Limitation of dividends, enforced by law, would merely transfer a larger proportion of profits into the capital market, unless it were combined with higher taxation of profits placed to reserve account. But such taxation would cause a prodigious outcry against the Government for confiscating the funds needed for industrial re-equipment in order to promote higher efficiency.

The subtleties of all this are, of course, past the comprehension of rank-and-file Trade Unionists (or rank-and-file business men), though not of Trade Union leaders, whose economic education has progressed greatly in recent years. The ordinary Trade Unionist sees only that the capitalists are making excessive profits while he is being told that, in the national interest, he must refrain from asking for higher wages. His leaders may persuade him, reluctantly, to agree to refrain; but he does not understand why, and, not understanding, he is not at all convinced. Consequently, the Union leaders have to promise him that they will press the Government to deal more severely with the profit-makers; but they can hardly be supposed to anticipate that much will happen as a result.

For what is the Government to do—unless, indeed, it is to go back on its attempt to limit subsidies? It can, no doubt, tax profits more highly, and face the outcry from business men who will mostly vote against it in any event, however well they are doing. But profit taxes, under conditions of scarcity, are likely to lead to higher rather than lower prices; for business men will normally do their best to pass them on. Alternatively, the Government can try more stringent price-controls; but these are very difficult to administer, except for highly standardised goods—and the biggest price advances are occurring where goods are not standardised. Or, again, it can reverse its policy of running the essential services on a paying basis; but that is only another way of increasing subsidies.

In face of all these problems, what is to be expected is that the Government will just carry on as it has been doing, allowing wage concessions to be made in moderation whenever they are strongly pressed for, but trying to keep them within bounds and trusting to the Trade Union leaders to stand by this policy as much as they dare. There is a good deal to be said for the view that this is the most sensible course to follow, and the least likely to lead to serious trouble. There is, however, an implied condition, which is that a real effort must be made both to increase production all round and to eliminate the inefficient producers whose high costs are the main obstacle to lower prices, and the prime cause of excessive profits accruing to the relatively efficient.

This suggests the need for action mainly along two lines. The first line is that of a real effort to discover human incentives that will work in the absence of the fear of unemployment. Sir George Schuster's Committee has already set a number of agencies to delve in this field; but what is wanted is something that gets a good deal nearer to the producer at machine and bench than academic investigators are usually able to get. The second line is to devise methods of putting a tighter squeeze on inefficiency, whenever it is found, even to the extent of cutting off supplies of materials, and perhaps of labour, to firms whose costs remain persistently high, and at the same time of making it possible for their lower-cost competitors to expand their output. This would mean dealing with industry a good deal less through trade associations under pledge not to let any of their members down, and a good deal more through independent controlling agencies backed by their own research machinery and not afraid to discriminate between efficient and inefficient producers in operating the various controls. There is a serious danger that a Socialist Government may fall into the delusion that, when socialisation is impracticable, a close private ring of profit-makers is the next best thing—whereas it is, in fact, the worst.

The proceedings at last week's Trades Union Congress have given the Government a breathing space. But the Government will be unwise if it mistakes this for a licence to carry on just as before. The instructions which the General Council have had to accept from Congress mean something which the Government will have to take into account. They mean, in effect, that unless the Government can find means of reducing the abnormally wide spread of current costs between the best firms and the worst, the continuance of high profits will end by undermining the policy of income stabilisation. There is still time to prevent this, but not by inaction.

JINNAH

THE Cabinet Mission had been in India for six weeks. So far, the press had not had a worthwhile story, not even a good photograph. The Conference at Simla, the first at which the leaders of Congress and the Muslim League had agreed to meet face to face in the presence of the Mission, was due to start on Sunday. Someone had the excellent idea that it would be nice for the newspapers if they could take a photograph of everyone shaking hands before they went into the Conference, and the arrangements for this had been made. When Mr. Jinnah heard about it the night before, he exploded. Be seen shaking hands with those fellows—not he!

I went down to his house to see what could be done about it. The Qaid-e-Azam was in a fury. The British could still have no idea what the dispute was all about. Otherwise they could not have insulted him by suggesting that he should be photographed with the two Muslim stooges that Congress had included among their four delegates. He wouldn't even talk to such quislings, let alone be seen with them. He had only come to Simla because of his sincere desire to help to find a solution. If this was how he was going to be treated . . . Finally, however, we agreed that the Congress representatives should reach the Viceregal Lodge at a quarter to ten, and be photographed; he and his colleagues should arrive a few minutes after ten, and pose for the camera-man in the certainty that Congress would be safely out of the way inside the building.

The attitude and what followed were typical. In every incident Jinnah saw the machinations of the Hindu mind, tricking and thwarting him; and every occasion was made the vehicle for demonstrating his inflexibility, his intransigeance and his adherence to the central principle. I never met him without hearing, at least once, the standard, unvarying lecture on the wrongs of the Muslims and the need for Pakistan. There was nothing bogus about it. He believed every word as passionately as he spoke it. He has been thought vain, grim, aloof, obsessed, humourless, unreasonable, almost repellant. He was all those things—he had to be—and yet he was likeable because he was all the opposites as well.

He had a charm of manner that, when he permitted himself to use it, was nearly irresistible. He had a kindness that came through his vehemence. Sometimes he would have a sudden burst of humility, of colossal doubt of his own capacity. He had strong affections, particularly for the British, which had been badly bruised. (Often it has been said he relied on British support. Of course he wanted it; but he felt himself to be only the recipient of rebuffs from that quarter.) But these attributes were luxuries that usually had to be thrust away so that he might better achieve his object.

Jinnah was aloof because the normal run of Muslim politicians were corrupt, too easily bought and sold. He could not trust them, and had to stand alone, except for a few faithful friends of limited stature who wanted nothing for themselves. He appeared vain because, to increase his prestige in India, he was obliged to seem high and apart. If he were to meet Mr. Gandhi, the Mahatma must come to see him, or else India would think Mr. Jinnah the less important. If "that Gandhi-fellow who sits behind the scenes and pulls the strings, and never comes out into the open," ran Congress like that, then Mr. Jinnah must be the equivalent *deus ex machina* of the Muslim League. It was all in the logical pattern, and it succeeded.

Talking to Mr. Jinnah, if one was sympathetic, it was easy to see what had happened, and that, in a topsy-turvy way, he was right. Beautifully dressed in his English clothes, sitting in an armchair in a European-furnished room of his house in Delhi, he was so utterly different from Mr. Gandhi squatting in his loin cloth on the floor. Once he had been an ardent nationalist in Congress. Gradually, as they kept him out of the leadership, he had become frustrated at the Hindu turn the Hindu majority gave to the organisation. He was stifled, and his mind, so clear on broad issues, so poor at details, became fogged and distressed by the sharper Hindu intellect. Although he himself was of Hindu descent, his Muslim upbringing had conditioned him into a outlook miles away from that of his ancestors. He identified himself with the backward Muslim masses, always two or three rungs lower in education and business ability than their Hindu counterparts. To him it seemed that he was being squeezed out by Congress, and that his co-religionists were being squeezed out by the Hindus. To support his contention he would quote lists of differences in communal habits, would point out that Mohammedanism forbade money-lending and that the Hindu *bania* had the wretched Muslim peasant in his grip by the shackles of debt. But the real withdrawal from the Hindus rested in something vaguer, deeper and intangible—the simple man's fear of the involved, memories of the Mogul rulers of all India—emotions that could be felt, but not argued.

So he didn't argue. He just said "Pakistan." Infuriated by the unreasonableness of it all, the Hindus offered concessions, guarantees, conciliations. Mr. Jinnah repeated, "Pakistan," and the Muslims knew what he meant, even if the Hindus complained: "He has a difficulty for every solution." I would try to draw him into discussing the economic structure of the hoped-for State, its military organisation, its boundaries. "Admit the principle of Pakistan first and then you will see." Save at Simla, and after he accepted the Cabinet Mission plan (when, if Congress had been less argumentative, absolute division might still have been avoided) he refused every time to compromise; and with each refusal his stock among the Muslims went up. His tactics were perfect and delightfully simple. They converted nearly all the doubters among the Muslims and created a nation. Now there is no obstinate, unbending leader in Pakistan; but even in his death Mr. Jinnah's timing may have been right. Now he is not there, and the need for agreement between Pakistan and India is most pressing, it may come about.

WOODROW WYATT

THE CHURCHES AND SOCIETY

IT is too early to estimate the significance i religious history of the first assembly of th World Council of Churches recently held i Amsterdam. Subsequent developments will hav to prove whether or no it marked a turning poi in the life of non-Roman Christianity—the poi where the free churches consciously turned the back upon the divisiveness and anarchy o freedom and sought after a wider unity and greater order within the framework of a non-authoritarian Christianity. It may well becom such a turning point; but it must be observed that democratic religion always faces a greater peril of anarchy and disorder than democrati politics. The road towards order and unity i therefore a hard one.

Socially and politically the assembly was significant because it recorded convictions which show the fallacy of those critics of the churches who uncritically identify religion with reaction. It is true that the great assembly did not have to commit itself to the diagnoses of the various commissions which analysed the "disorder of the world" and the relation of the churches to that disorder. It merely "received and commended" the reports. It could, however, have rejected any of the reports; and it frequently exercised the right of amendment. The reports, as accepted, therefore represented roughly the common mind of the most representative group of churchmen ever gathered together from all parts of the world.

The statement which aroused the greatest degree of interest was the equilateral condemnation of both capitalism and Communism. "The church," declared the report, "should reject the ideologies which underlie both *laissez-fair* capitalism and Communism . . . Each has made promises which it could not redeem—Communism promises that freedom will follow automatically upon the completion of the revolution; capitalism promises that justice will follow as a by-product of free enterprise. That, too, is an ideology which has proved false."

Positively the report called upon Christian churches to help explore the middle ground and "to seek for creative solutions which do not allow either justice or freedom to destroy the other." This middle ground will be generally recognised as the realm of democratic Socialism. But it would be wrong to make this identification too complete; for there were many Christian Conservatives, or at least Christian non-Socialists, at the assembly who accepted the report because they rightly felt that the church did not, and could not, commit its members to a particular party's politics; and that, in any event, there were many "creative" approaches to politics in the modern world which were not strictly Socialist, though they would hardly be creative if they did not, in the words of the report, "subordinate economic activities to social ends."

On the question of the socialisation of property the report declared:

> The church cannot resolve the debate between those who believe that the primary solution is to socialize the means of production and those who fear that such a course will merely lead to new and inordinate combinations of economic and political power, culminating finally in the omnicompetent State. But it can remind the advocates of socialization that the institution of property is not the root of the corruption of human nature, and that its abolition cannot therefore achieve the Utopian ends usually expected. And it can remind the defenders of existing property relations that ownership is not an unconditioned right, and it must therefore be preserved, curtailed and distributed in accordance with the requirements of justice.

The requirements of justice are that we, on the one hand, "vindicate the supremacy of persons over purely technical considerations and subordinate all economic processes and cherished rights to the community as a whole." And that "on the other hand we seek to preserve the possibility of a satisfying life for 'little men in a big society.'"

The secular reader probably will note that e whole approach to political justice is informed the Christian conviction that human nature "corrupted," and that there is therefore no arantee that the elimination of specific, social ils through new social institutions may not eate fresh evils. "Men are often disillusioned," e report declares, "by finding that changes particular systems do not bring unqualified ood but fresh evils. New temptations to greed d power arise even in systems more just than ose which they have replaced because sin is ver present in the human heart." This Christian onviction will probably not be as quickly rected as it once was, since our generation has ad opportunity to see the Utopian illusions f both liberals and Marxists refuted by actual istory. But, at any rate, there it is, as an invitable part of a characteristically Christian nalysis of social evils. The present writer regards t as a source of wisdom.

Communism was condemned because (1) of the promise of what amounts to the complete edemption of man in history"; (2) because of its belief that a particular class is free . . . rom the sins and ambiguities which Christians elieve to be characteristic of all human existnce"; (3) "its materialistic and deterministic eachings . . . are incompatible with the Christian belief in man as a person, made in the mage of God and responsible to him"; and (4) ecause of the policies of Communist dictatorhips in "controlling every aspect of life." But Christians were asked to "recognise with contrition that many churches are involved n forms of economic injustice and racial discrimination which have created the conditions favourable to the growth of Communism, and that the atheism and anti-religious teaching of Communism are in part a reaction to the chequered record of a professedly Christian society." However the secular reader may estimate the relation of Christianity to modern society, he must admit that this kind of analysis is free of the notes of self-righteous judgment upon "atheism" which have characterised the pronouncements of many churches, and more particularly of the Roman church.

This equilateral condemnation of Communism and capitalism sprang from the hearts of a radical Continent and an even more radical Asia. Protestant Christianity in continental Europe was once quietistic—either indifferent to politics or frankly a supporter of the old order. The Amsterdam conference proved how seriously the past decades and the experience of the churches in resisting Nazism have altered the social outlook of the churches and how they have increased their sense of social responsibility. As one delegate, a Christian Socialist Mayor of a German city, put it: "Recent history has reduced all bourgeois existence in Europe to the insecurity which once characterised proletarian life alone. Whatever spiritual insights are derived from that social insecurity are, therefore, no longer exclusively proletarian. If Christianity insists that the social environment does not finally determine the meaning of our existence, it can make that point only if it recognises the immediate and pressing importance of all questions relating to the organisation of a tolerable justice."

The radicalism of Europe at the conference was strongly anti-Communist. The lone voice in favour of Russia was that of the Prague theological professor, Hromadka. It might be mentioned in passing that the most powerful theological influence on the Continent, that of Karl Barth, is obliquely pro-Communist but not actively so. The radicalism of Africa and Asia, on the other hand, is friendly to Communism. The poverty of the Orient, the resentment of the coloured peoples of the world against the white man's arrogance, the aspirations of colonial peoples, rightly or wrongly imagining that Russia is their champion against the "imperialistic" Powers—all these factors contribute to the formation of something new in the history of Christianity. This something new is not exactly Christian Communism, but a form of Christianity tremendously sympathetic to Communism. I should add, from the standpoint of Western prejudices, that it is also tremendously naive about the actual workings of the Communist political machine and rather ignorant about recent political history in Europe. The general hatred of Britain, as an imperial Power, and of America, as embodying the dreams of technical power and economic wealth which incite both the envy and the moral loathing of the Orient, contribute to this attitude. After attending three ecumenical Christian conferences in the past year, I have come to the conclusion that, even if there were no other evidence available, the attitude of Christians in Africa and Asia would prove that the greatest triumphs of Communism will be achieved in the non-European world.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

A LONDON DIARY

It is just three years since last I left London for some months together, as I am about to do again now. They have not been the best years of any of our lives, the three years since Japan surrendered in the summer of 1945; but now that I have occasion to look back on them, I am surprised to find how much I have learnt in them. Though the learning is almost less important than the surprise, they have been surprising years, and the surprises have not been all unpleasant. When I left London in the autumn of 1945 I thought it a very dowdy town. The rotted sandbags, the boarded shop windows and the large gaps of rubble freshly blown by flying bombs and rockets made a gloomy setting. But it was a familiar setting; and the wounds after all were the wounds of war, where the whiff of gangrene was an expected and a heroic touch. I did not take fright about the state of London until I got to Tokio. For Tokio was London not after five but after fifteen years of war; and, more than that, after nearly fifty years of a larger war, between a driving industrial ambition and an indifferent poverty. I cannot describe the desert seediness of the industrial towns of Japan; I find it difficult now even to recall it, so much does it lame the imagination. I am leaving aside altogether the war damage; for the industrial slums of Nagasaki which happened to survive the atomic bomb were more heartbreaking than the factories which were destroyed. The desolation of Japan is that everything is worn out and everything is running down. You feel vividly there what I had never felt before, that machines can age, suffer and die.

* * *

This was the memory that struck me like a blow when I saw London again on New Year's Day, 1946. The cockeyed Andersons, the shabby railways and the scaly lamp-standards seemed to me less the scars of war than the symptoms of a galloping industrial decline. We had been letting our capital equipment grow out of date long before the war; during the war it had had to go unrenewed; but now there were signs that we were running it to death. London had to me all the air of decay of Tokio, the Japanese air of cheerless make-do with unproductive labour and antiquated machines. I did not like my homecoming at all. But now, leaving London again, I am happy to see how wrong I was. I was not quite wrong, of course: the fuel crisis early in 1947 showed that, and the other strains in electricity and transport. And I have been reminded of Japan from time to time, most recently by the scuffle to hoard cigarettes—but that neurosis is too universal to fit into these London reflections. Nevertheless, in spite of the pressure (from the American side of the Atlantic as well as from ours) to live only for tobacco and food and the other pleasures of the present, we are replacing our industrial equipment: the new machinery in the mines shows on how bold a conception. The conception at this moment is as important as the achievement. It was lack of conception that lay below the physical death in Japan—lack of adaptation and of new thought about industrial methods. To me, the new organisation of the flow of work which we are inventing, for example in the cotton industry, is as hopeful as any shiny machine for making nylons. Of course we have not by any means made an industrial recovery: we have hardly begun. But we seem to know the road. And that road is new: there are no signposts if you want to go by way of an egalitarian society. No nation has been built up from the state to which we had sunk without great suffering by some classes; Weimar Germany was not, nor N.E.P. Russia, nor at an earlier time Japan herself. I spent my last day in Tokio at the Imperial University with Nishina, a physicist with a worldwide reputation. When inevitably the electric light failed, we worked by candlelight, each bringing his own stump of candle. My last memory of the great man is seeing him, in the rain and the dark, running after a tram which already had people riding on the buffers.

* * *

London in the last three years has again become a metropolis; and even to-day I find that a remarkable achievement. I do not mean that London has become more gracious and less forbidding to its tourists: it has not, as witness its indifference to all Olympic comers. Nevertheless, we have shed some of the sillier affectations of insularity—for you can give your life to tourists and still remain obstinately insular, as the Swiss do. When I first came to England, I was much struck by the curious phrase "sporting and dramatic." I could not conceive of an odder combination; and to-day neither, I imagine, can you. It is not that the London theatre has become solemn, but it has become a serious theatre, as well as a cosmopolitan one. I saw in a fortnight recently *The Glass Menagerie* and *Crime Passionnel* and *Caribbean Rhapsody* and *The Relapse*. I do not want to argue the depth or status of any of these; but to have them all running at once, in August, and others as good, is surely a remarkable achievement. My few visits to New York may have been ill-timed, but I carried away from them long ago the conviction that the London stage was the livelier and the more critical. Indeed, it seems to me that we have had an admirable example of the two tastes this year in the failure in London of *The Voice of the Turtle* and in New York of *The Linden Tree*. Better Italian, French, and for that matter American films can be seen at any one time in London than in any other city.

* * *

What I think is less well known, though it should be a matter for equal pride, is that London certainly remains the intellectual capital of the world in science. England was the pioneer in scientific education, and particularly in popular education in science. The Royal Institution in Albemarle Street (which was founded by the most cosmopolitan of all Americans, who was born Benjamin Thomson and died Count Rumford) is still the lively embodiment of that wish to understand and to be understood. The British Association has shown itself again to be as lively and as serious. It has had a great revival in the years since the war, has made less of academic exchanges and more of scientific matters which are urgent to everyone. It was in this spirit that this year the social context of our science was discussed by Sir Henry Tizard, and its philosophic standing by Lord Samuel. But there is really no end to this kind of example. I know no comparative figures, but I am willing to lay a modest bet that London has more research laboratory space than any city in the world, not excluding Los Alamos; and that it is used a good deal more sensibly.

* * *

I may seem to have been speaking of a rather small and highbrow core of London, and forgetting the 750 square miles of suburbs. It is an appalling figure; what would Queen Elizabeth say to it, who prohibited new building in London because she thought it was too big nearly four hundred years ago? Queen Elizabeth and the Great Fire have played into our hands; for I think they made London far more homogeneous than it appears.

There really is not much to choose between the pubs in Leicester Square and Enfield. The film of *Hamlet* will be as popular in one place as in the other. I once saw Pavlova take the house by storm in Croydon, and I do not doubt that *Les Forains* would do the same to-morrow. Nor is it only history which retains for us the scientific leadership of the world. Laboratories are made with hands as well as heads ; laboratory apparatus and experiments are designed by wise heads, but they do not work (as James Watt complained) except in wise hands. The wise hands that once made London famous for its guns and saddles and made-to-order knives ply different trades. But they have lost neither their skill nor their interests. They have not yet found again the ideal industrial applications for the craftsman's interests, which go deeper than his skill beause they must inform his skill. But leaving London to-day, I feel their presence. London this time does not seem to me to be running down ; it seems to me to be winding up the clockwork for which it was famous before Switzerland was born. J. BRONOWSKI

CHARM SCHOOL

"In the coming struggle for the general election, the Labour movement must say what it means to do . . . with courtesy."—Mr. Shinwell, Sept. 6th.

A season of mellow reflection
    Warns Labour that courtesy pays;
In view of the general election
    The bourgeois moral they must raise.
While middle-class voters still waver,
    Plain speaking does infinite harm,
Hard knocks are henceforth out of favour—
    The accent's on charm.

Now silver-tongued Socialist Nestors
    Will soothe the gratuitous slight,
Assuaging the insult that festers
    With the ointment of sweetness and light;
If taunts which the faithful enrapture
    Still stick in the middle-class throat,
Those lower than vermin may capture
    The marginal vote.

Now Ministers' mouths must be mealy
    As they broadcast the great feast of love,
The steel hand, once brandished too freely,
    Must be sheathed in the soft velvet glove;
For the whips and the scorpions of candour
    They must substitute courtesy's pink,
For the middle-class view it as slander
    When told that they stink.

Now Ministers pleading for power
    Must pause before gnashing their teeth,
They must look like the innocent flower
    While being the serpent beneath;
As the critical ballot looms nearer
    There is need to appease and appeal—
There is nothing that Labour holds dearer
    Than middle-class weal.

The charm school rebukes wayward pupils,
    They must mend their unmannerly ways,
They must banish their working-class scruples
    And remember that courtesy pays.
But the courtesy campaign promoters
    May still have good cause for regret—
Like elephants, middle-class voters
    Never forget.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

A North Country dentist, suffering from toothache, pulled two of his own teeth and applied to the Dental Board for payment under the National Health Scheme for professional services. Payment is being delayed while the Dental Board headquarters at Eastbourne discuss the position.—*Daily Telegraph.* (KENNETH REED.)

The writer got a great thrill to-day—watching the Manx Grand Prix races were two American airmen, in beautiful khaki, with their cameras; and wearing the S.H.A.E.F. flash of the World War. It was just like the good old days of 1944/45.—*The Isle of Man Times.* (F. W. ASHTON.)

A 24-year-old man was to-day in the Glasgow Eastern Police Court ordered to be detained until Monday for further inquiry. The charge against him alleges that early to-day in Dalmarnock Road, near Hozier Street, both in Glasgow, he assaulted a man and robbed him of three cigarettes.—*Glasgow Evening Times (Glasgow).* (W. A. ANDERSON.)

There are some Jewish elements in America which see anti-Semitism in every British film . . . Fagin is not specially a Jew in the religious sense. He is a fictional character who might have been anything—even an American.—Interview in *Daily Herald.* (R. C.)

THE REVOLT OF THE ELDERS

AN eminent surgeon has been stirring up the elders to revolt against the tyranny of the Pensionable Age. Sir E. Rock Carling (71) at the Brighton meeting of the British Association exhorted his venerable audience: "Don't retire! Keep on at the job you know." He assured them that the retiring age of 65 or 70 was quite arbitrary and had no scientific justification, and that chronological age has no relevance to biological age. Bald-heads, reverend beards and grey "buns" wagged enthusiastically in support. Sticks thumped on the floor in approval, and the crystal chandeliers of the Royal Pavilion tinkled like a musical box. Perhaps it was a new version of the *Marseillaise*—"Allons vieillards de la patrie . . ." And the younger members of the audience looked round disconsolately at the professors whose chairs (and shoes) they were waiting to occupy.

As a gerontologist—exponent of the science of old age—Sir E. Rock Carling made out a good case. He did not, of course, pretend that there was no physiological change with advancing years. But physiologists still do not know, for instance, why cartilages and arteries calcify and harden, and they only imperfectly understand the ageing processes and the causes of the marked variations in the ageing of individuals. Therefore, neither they nor the actuaries are qualified to fix the pensionable age, which is purely a convention, an economic convenience, or, rather, at the moment, an uneconomic inconvenience. What the physiologists *do* know is that the human organism is highly adaptable, and Rock Carling insisted that if, in war, they could extend the adaptable range of young men by discovering the functions of which they were capable, they could do as much for the aged and keep them usefully and gainfully employed. One does not, he pointed out, expect a man of 40 to win a 100-yards sprint or do aerobatics in the stratosphere. Neither should one expect veterans to do work beyond their measurable powers of endurance. Nevertheless, elderly people often took a new lease of life and energy when they found work which released them from the monotony and unchanging rhythm of the same old job. If they could mix with the young, learn from the young and unobtrusively pass on their own experience, they could keep young and keep their job.

It would seem, then, that we need fitness tests and vocational guidance, not only on entering industry, but at the age when people are due for retirement. That is quite feasible. Indeed, elderly city men have been known to consult the National Institute for Industrial Psychology to decide what activities they should take up to escape the boredom of retirement and (as Rock Carling pointed out) the risk of premature death. Some have made a second, and perhaps more useful career—like the stockbroker who became a successful practical farmer. That, of course, is only the gilt-edged version of the postman who longs for his pension in order to devote himself to his allotment. On the other hand, lots of workers who feel that they are superannuated while they are still active, do not know where their "second chance" abilities lie. Vocational guidance might help a lot.

The B.A. discussions, however, were not confined to giving stimulus or comfort to the old. They were concerned basically with the national problem of the changing age-structure, and its relation to productivity and social insurance. There are now six million healthy and independent men and women of pensionable age and barely 200,000 ailing, sick or decrepit. This percentage—13½ per cent.—of the population is more than double what it was in 1901 and treble what is was 70 years ago. With the changing birth-rate and the prolongation of the expectation of life through improved health conditions, the proportion of aged to the productive and reproductive middle-group will presently become serious. The present 32½ million of working age will diminish, and fewer and fewer workers will have to support more and more pensioners. As Dr. W. A. Sanderson, secretary of the National Corporation for the Care of Old People, pointed out, if we could add five years to the working life, we could halve the burden of old age by increasing the numbers of working age and reducing the numbers of dependent age. And there was validity in his claim that we should invoke the old to redress the balance of the young, since, increasingly, entry into careers is being postponed by the later school-leaving age and military service.

But doctors, like Rock Carling, regard people, not as Statistical Men, but as individuals and living personalities fitting into a social organism. It is possible, as he suggested, to adapt the environment of productive old age, just as physiologists and others during the war adapted the conditions and extended the usefulness of younger men and women in the Services. But that, surely, is not the whole story. I noticed the President of the B.A., Sir Henry Tizard (63) in the audience. He is also chief scientific adviser to the Government and chairman of the Committee on Industrial Productivity. I could imagine the conflict within him as he listened to these arguments for productive old age—the case for having more available hands at a time when industry, through inertia or lack of capital re-equipment, cannot employ the scientific resources which can replace or reduce human effort. I recalled his strictures in his Presidential address. His complaint was about the backwardness of British technology and the lack of modern thinking, indeed of scientifically trained men, in the higher executives of industry. One wonders whether he would be grateful to Rock Carling for suggesting that these men should persist in "the jobs they know," or, as Tizard would say, don't know.

Similarly, there has been a fairly consistent theme throughout the whole of the B.A. Conference which might be summed up as "letting Youth down"—criticisms of the content of education and training in the schools, in the technical colleges, in industry and the universities; criticisms of our colonial enterprises; criticisms of our failure to give the adolescents a proper standard of values. Mark you, it was the elders who were saying all this; it was self-criticism. But it meant that old ideas had not changed to march with the times, and one could sympathise with the reproachful looks of the younger scientists when they saw Age and Habit and Tradition being entrenched by the new creed of "Age shall not Wither."

It may be true, as was suggested, that an ageing population does not mean a senile body politic, that maturity is a merit and a gerontocracy can still provide a rich and dynamic social culture; but if it means the frustration of the younger men with new ideas and natural ambitions it can be unhealthy. It is not easy to expect, as Rock Carling suggested, that elders will be content to surrender "the privileges of first violinist while playing second fiddle." They may block omotion and collect the financial plums, while unger men, with modern ideas, struggle for cognition and economic advancement. Indeed, should err if I did not record that one elderly retic at Brighton urged me to launch in this urnal a campaign for "Death at Sixty-nine." his sturdy rebel against Carlingism offered to be e first to step into the tumbril.

RITCHIE CALDER

MARKS AND MORALS

HE swastika was well enough drawn to indi- te loving care and long practice, but every- ing else about the letter was crude. The paper as cheap, the handwriting (clumsily disguised capital letters) was uncouth, the spelling and ammar faulty, the content a plain threat of urder. A friend in Frankfurt, another in Ham- urg, and many other well-known anti-Fascists ere receiving such letters quite regularly, and was interested to learn that this practice, com- on in the early days but almost completely dis- ntinued since 1946, was showing a remarkable vival since the currency reform. The explan- ion is simple and significant. In the inter- ening period the letter-writers were busily (and ore profitably) engaged on the Black Market.

Is this an indication of the present political end in the West? Do the Nazis, to quote a opular German saying, "*wittern Morgenluft?*" o they really "sense their new dawn?" That ey do is certainly the story one gets from .E.D. (Communist) politicians in Berlin. I got ore than stories; I got a large file listing the ames of prominent Nazi industrialists now lleged to be back in high positions and in un- mited enjoyment of an economic power never st and a political power regained. I had the le checked by trustworthy experts in the Wes- ern Zone, and they told me that, while some f my information was dated or exaggerated, uch of it—far too much for their liking—was ubstantially correct.

When interviewing senior C.C.G. officials about his state of things, one gets the old argument of he difficulty of drawing the proper line between fficiency and ideological reliability—an argument ot too easily dismissed in the light of practical xperience. When one takes it up with German Socialist (S.P.D.) leaders, they will say that they re far more sincerely perturbed about it than heir S.E.D. critics, who might do well to weed heir own garden first before finding fault with thers. When one refers that counter-accusation ack to S.E.D. leaders, they indignantly deny aving admitted any former Nazis to responsible ositions in the Party or in the Administration. However that may be, the one certainty about German domestic politics is the fact that party considerations are the dominant factor, and that he feud between Socialists and Communists is more implacable than ever.

But what about those who have no party affiliation? Are they readily accepting the shrewd Communist propaganda that the Western Imperialists and their S.P.D. lackeys are out to carve up the fatherland and to sell the precious heritage of German unity? I found that the man-in-the-street, so far as he thinks about such problems at all, takes some form of German unity at some future date so much for granted that he does not bother his head about it. On a higher intellectual level, what one mostly finds is a shrug of the shoulders and the inevitable phrase, "*Wir sind ja nur ein Spielball der Weltpolitik.*" This assertion, that Germany is a mere "pawn of world politics," is heard most frequently in Berlin, and it is generally said a little smugly, with pride of being so important, and relief at being excused from thinking for oneself. It is a sort of political escapism. But the vast majority of the ordinary people one encounters are interested only in their own material conditions; and, since the currency reform, the only thing people seem to care for—particularly in the West—is prices and wages and their growing incongruity *vis-à-vis* shop windows still miraculously crammed with desirable, long-missed commodities.

Even a month or two after the "miracle" a sort of Christmas atmosphere still prevailed. But what amazed me most was the almost universal indifference to the gigantic fraud of hoarding in the past those desperately needed goods. Righteous anger was exceptional. I shall never forget one evening, two years ago, in a Hanover orphanage — the sore little bodies of those wretched babies who, for lack of nappies, had to be wrapped in paper; the indomitable courage of those calm, emaciated women who worked an 18-hour day on a starvation diet, cut up their own rags to clothe the infants, and kept the place going in spite of the lack of practically all essentials, from soap to safety-pins. It makes me furious with rage even now to think that all that time some hard-faced German merchants were coolly hoarding most of those desperately needed goods towards the day when they could sell them for precious D. Marks. Or, to take a still more serious case, what about those thousands who will be crippled for life because there was not enough salvarsan obtainable to cure syphilis in the primary stage. After the currency reform, as several doctors told me, ample supplies came out of hiding. Yet, among Germans, I found little sense of shame or even anger. Resentment? Yes, but it was tempered by pleasure (not to say awe) at the sight of full shop-windows. The general reaction seemed to be: "Of course it's a *Schweinerei*, but what else could one expect? Had I been lucky enough to be in those damned hoarders' shoes, I should have done the same."

Does all this prove a general moral decline? I am afraid it does. When I took train from Frankfurt to Bremen the German sleeping-car conductor told me that if I wished to keep my window open I had better remove anything within reach: at Kassel and other stations there would be a platform on the off-side, out of his observation. People there had made it a regular job to try a lucky dip into any open window. An even more serious aspect is the disruption of family life, inevitable with husbands in captivity for years and the general dislocation caused by refugees. Lawyers told me that divorce cases still make up the most substantial part of their practice, and the great numerical preponderance of women will be a very grave social problem for many years to come.

In Hamburg I was accosted by one of the prostitutes parading outside the Reichshof Hotel. I took her to a nearby café, paid her fee (M.10) and had half an hour's chat. She told me that she was "doing that" only two or three times a week, so as to keep herself in cigarettes, liquor and cosmetics, which she could not afford on the M.180 a month salary of the clerical job she held. She added that she had only been "doing it" since the currency reform had put such little luxuries in the shops. She had a thoroughly matter-of-fact attitude about it all, and no moral scruples. Her family? Direct bomb-hit. A boy-friend? Killed in action. Prospects of marriage? She laughed uproariously at the mere idea of getting a man for herself.

It is easy enough to moralise about Germany, but less easy if one knows what almost everybody has been through. Yet, there is some decency left in Germany and quite a few men and women who have preserved admirable integrity in almost unbearable circumstances. One such man told me of a rather significant inner struggle in that bitterly hard winter of '46-47. Almost everybody in his town had taken to sneaking to the railway yard at night and pinching coal. My friend's problem was whether to do likewise or to continue seeing his young family freezing stiff night after night. After serious consideration of all the moral aspects concerned, he told me with a laugh, his wife and he decided to continue trying to keep warm in the glow of a good conscience. He now thought it might have been wiser to pinch some coal and thus to save one of his children from pneumonia.

HEINRICH FRAENKEL

WHITE AUSTRALIA

(By a Correspondent)

THE Australian Government, concerned about its country's name in South-East Asia, recently sent a goodwill mission to administer some soothing syrup in the form of relief and educational supplies and scholarships to Australian universities. All this will cost the Australian taxpayers £400,000. At the same time the mission has been explaining the White Australia policy—no easy task among millions of simple illiterate people to whom the policy appears both insulting and unjust. But the Commonwealth's Labour Government has no intention of modifying White Australia. It is one of the few ideas upon which all the main political parties are agreed.

The White Australia policy, in actual practice, simply means the exclusion of coloured people from permanent residence in the country. Its origins go back nearly 100 years. It was introduced to safeguard living and labour standards after extensive agitation following the use of Chinese to break a gold mine strike in Victoria in 1873. Some years before, there were 42,000 Chinese on the Victorian goldfields, and they were always the subject of much muddled hostile thinking. By 1886 every colony in Australia had passed laws discriminating against the Chinese.

The same agitation also brought to an end the use by Queensland sugar plantations of Kanaka labour from the Pacific Islands. In 30 years 47,000 of these people were brought to Australia under a system of indentured labour little better than slavery. White Australia became a popular political slogan, even among employers, who could safely pose as patriots after they had discovered that most coloured labour was inefficient and unprofitable. The firm support for the policy by all the colonies caused the British Government considerable embarrassment and actually became a spur towards national self-government. In 1897 three colonies adopted the Natal Dictation Test, which enabled unwanted people to be kept out by means of a language test without appearing to discriminate against any particular nationality. Four years later, the first Federal Parliament adopted a modified form of language test which has been retained ever since for use against anyone the Government did not want in, coloured or white.

Australia's prestige in the East has always been rather poor because of misunderstandings over White Australia—the very term is objectionable to coloured people—but during and immediately after the war there was a marked change. Australian troops proved popular among native populations; Papuans, who did grand work carrying supplies and aiding wounded troops, were called "fuzzy-wuzzy angels" in the popular press; asylum was given to hundreds of Indonesians, Malays, Chinese and others who escaped from the Japanese. Australian troops, having no racial problem at home, took kindly to the American Negroes, treating them as equals and so horrifying any Southern Americans near by. The Indonesians, too, were well liked, particularly among Left-wingers, who gave them plenty of encouragement in their struggle against the Dutch.

Since then, however, things have changed; Australia's chance to provide leadership for many of her neighbouring countries in the post-war world appears to have been lost. Once conditions became more normal, the Australian Government began sending home many who had settled down and hoped to remain in Australia. Last November, 14 Malay seamen married to Australian women and with homes and children in Australia were ordered to leave the country. Immediately resentment against the White Australia policy flared up in Malaya and there were calls for a boycott of Australian products. Then it was announced a few months ago that Australian troops in Japan would not be allowed to bring their Japanese wives into the country and the marriages would not be recognised. The announcement followed reports of an Australian serviceman who had been captured by the Japanese at Singapore, worked on the notorious Siam-Burma "death" railway, volunteered for service in Japan after the war, and had secretly married a Japanese university graduate. He claimed that when he disclosed his marriage to a senior officer he was "bundled back home" and discharged.

An American Negro boxer, Clarence Reeves, better known as the Alabama Kid, had lived in Australia for the past 10 years, and had a young Australian wife and two children. He was arrested on a deportation warrant in a New South Wales country town in April and brought handcuffed to Sydney where he was lodged in gaol pending his deportation. The N.S.W. Boxing and Wrestling Association condemned his treatment as "ruthless and improper" and said his arrest and deportation violated the sanctity of family life.

More recently, Mr. Calwell, Australia's Immigration Minister, spoke of Maoris being excluded from Australia. Instantly there was an outburst in New Zealand which could be felt right across the Tasman Sea to Canberra. New Zealanders, justly proud of the Maori people and of the way racial difficulties have been overcome in their country, were quick to take offence. Mr. Jack Lang, who makes up the one-man band known as the Lang Labour Party, reminded the Australian Government that the New Zealand Labour Government was dependent on four Maoris for its majority. A few days afterwards Mr. Calwell gave an assurance that Maoris already resident in Australia would remain undisturbed, despite immigration laws. That exceptions can be made to the White Australia policy is not likely to be forgotten in Asia.

Protests have been made in the Commonwealth Parliament against the rigidity with which the Immigration Restriction Act is being applied, and there seems good reason to believe that in many cases hardship and cruelty are being caused unnecessarily. Certainly in some of the cases exceptions to the law would have been no more than acts of mercy. But Mr. Calwell is frequently inclined to be tactless. To those who protested he said: "If sentimentalists, emotionalists and minority groups opposed the present immigration laws they should try to have them altered."

In recent years economic arguments in support of White Australia have become rather flimsy. Australia's trade unions are strong and quick to guard their hard-won privileges. Most of the people lately deported had apparently been assimilated into the Australian population, and there was no suggestion that they were working below award rates. Yet Australians, generally speaking, now feel that their country should continue to keep free from racial troubles. In addition, the recent Pacific War has given White Australia a new importance from the defence point of view.

THE SWISS CURE

THIS summer I took a cure in Switzerland. I didn't lie in a mudbath or swallow peptic waters, but simply read three Swiss newspapers every day at breakfast. Knowing German better than French, I bought the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, the *Basler National-Zeitung*, and the *Bund*. But the *Tribune de Genève* or the *Gazette de Lausanne* would have been equally efficacious.

The peculiarity of the Swiss press, which gives it these curative qualities, is its complete disregard for the "news values" of Fleet Street. The *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, for instance, is published three times a day—not in three editions, but in three completely different parts. Part I—breakfast reading—may lead with a four-column despatch from Paris, rounding up the French political crisis. Part II—at lunch time—will perhaps have nothing on the front page but a description of Tibet's relations with the outside world, received by air mail a few days previously. Part III—tea time—features a despatch from London on the progress of the Moscow conversations. A section of page 2 is usually devoted to news items in our Anglo-Saxon sense of the word—concise and ungarbled quotations from agency despatches. Local news, as well as trade, industry and finance, are fully treated in all editions.

The *Basler National-Zeitung* has a bad name in Switzerland. It is considered "fast" and unreliable. Published in two parts daily, it actually prints some crowded Gothic headlines across the top of its front page. Even worse, part of the back page is devoted to "last news," short agency messages with delicate pale blue headings. But by our standards its addiction to "hot news" is not very acute. One Thursday last July, Mr. Bevin made an important statement on Berlin in the House of Commons at 3.30 p.m. I knew I shouldn't find it in my breakfast part of the *N.Z.Z.*, and rather guiltily trotted to the news stand round the corner to buy a copy of the *Basler*. But there was nothing, not even a sentence in the pale blue "last news" on the back page. Cursing the incompetence of the Swiss press, I had to wait until after lunch to read what Ernie had said.

That was the beginning of my cure. Compelled that morning to read my papers without the latest news, I found them as informative as ever, and learned a great deal which I should have missed if the editors had cleared their front pages to make room for the Foreign Secretary. Moreover, as far as I could discover, I suffered no ill effects from reading him after lunch instead of with my breakfast. Sobered by this discovery, I began to reflect on the philosophy of "news."

News coverage in our popular press is based on the principle that every paper every day must excel all its rivals in not "missing" the latest news available. Throughout the night, as the news comes in on the tapes, the front page is made up and re-made up, again and again, in order to make it as "hot" and as "human" as possible. The editor's joy is an "exclusive"; his nightmare that he may miss something which his rivals will feature prominently. With so little space, he has to scrap nine-tenths of the news on the tickers. In selecting the little he can print, he must remember that world politics as such is not a circulation-builder, and that too much information which is neither "hot" nor "human" will make his news columns look heavy. So what happens? Let us imagine that the Paris correspondent has sent in a first-rate report on the French political crisis, and the industrial correspondent on plans for re-shaping the Coal Board. During the night these two reports will first be emasculated, and finally disappear altogether off the front page, if an American transport plane crashes at Templehof or there is a triple murder in Limehouse. The Paris and the Coal Board stories, if they ever were news, have ceased to be so in the course of a few hours. There can, of course, be no question of using either of them next day. They are dead.

American editors, with 60 or 70 pages at their disposal, can solve the problem by pushing such stories farther back in the paper, making them more difficult to find, but still leaving them for the reader who is interested. But with only four pages, the British editor must kill many important stories altogether.

The definitions of "hot news" and "news value" are largely an Anglo-Saxon convention. There is, for instance, no logical reason why a story should not be printed simply because it got squeezed out the night before. These definitions are the result of competitive circulation. Once a newspaper costs more to produce than the penny for which it sells, and relies on advertising revenue for its financial existence, circulation rivalry must dominate its news policy. No editor, however desirous of informing his readers about the world, can afford to miss the day's "hot" and "human" news. Cost what it may, he must ensure that his reader, sitting in the Tube and looking over his neighbour's shoulder, does not see some striking story which he hasn't got on his own front page. Sensationalism is not an original sin of Anglo-Saxon journalists, but an inevitable consequence of a competitive press, which costs more to produce than its selling price.

The lesson of my Swiss cure was that the reader who wants to know what is going on, and is content to wait twelve hours for the latest news, gets far more information from the slow-moving Swiss press than from our own popular newspapers. The full round-up from a special correspondent, published once or twice a week, and supported by a few short agency messages, gives a far more continuous flow of information than the bits and pieces which survive in the nightly Fleet Street chase after a lively front page. This applies as much to the reporting of a murder trial as to accounts of a political crisis (which is why *The Times* Law Reports usually contain more juicy reading than the *Daily Express*). What makes the popular press so "unreliable" is the Gresham's Law of journalism that hot news drives out cold information. Sefton Delmer, the most brilliant of our popular foreign correspondents, has only been able to provide the readers of the *Daily Express* with any real news of foreign affairs by retreating out of the news columns to the leader page, and appearing as a feature every Monday. His news, as a result, is even "colder" than anything in the *N.Z.Z.* But if his material had to compete for a place in the news columns, it would hardly ever be published. This, indeed, is a general tendency in the popular press. The reporter who really wants to report, and not merely to send a news flash, is compelled to become a feature writer, or to take refuge in the weeklies.

For good reporting, whether of a football match or of E.R.P., is impossible without reflection and analysis. History does not consist of a series of atomic events, to be covered in a series of disjointed cables, some of which are published and some not, according to the chance of the night. But to-day it is the "straight news," provided by the news agencies, which gets into the news columns. Because the agencies are also highly competitive, this "straight news" consists of a series of flashes, which are botched together by harried subs. in the various newspaper offices.

It is here that the Swiss press has its great advantage. Swiss newspapers are still small-circulation, city or cantonal, papers. Far more expensive than our own, and relying more on subscriptions than on news-stand sales, they have no economic motive for indulging in a frantic competition for national circulation; and so the Gresham's Law of journalism does not operate. Hot news in Switzerland does not drive out cold information. If there is no big news story—and there usually isn't—they need not blow up a minor story and create in their readers the feeling every day of a fresh sensation or a new crisis. Fortunately for the Swiss journalist, cantonal loyalty is very strong and provides a mass circulation for what remain genuinely local newspapers. Even more fortunately, local independence has not been destroyed in Switzerland, as it has been in America, by national syndication of news and features.

The Swiss press in this respect resembles the best of our local evening newspapers. It still retains some of the features of nineteenth-century journalism. It is de-centralised, individualistic and "heavy reading." Its major purpose is to inform, not to increase circulation or to satisfy the advertising manager. Thus it has avoided both the French disease of political corruption and the Anglo-Saxon disease of sensationalism.

Yet newspaper readership in Switzerland is as high as in any country in Europe, which disproves the theory that the working-class will not read a "heavy paper."

I drew one conclusion from my three weeks' cure. It is not the political bias of the press lords which is the main cause of distortion and unreliability. Strong political views, even if they get into the news columns, have never corrupted a newspaper, as the records of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *N.Z.Z.* amply prove. The Gresham's Law of journalism operates in Fleet Street because circulations have grown ridiculously large, and space ridiculously small.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

The Arts and Entertainment

RADIO NOTES

It was a daring venture of Miss Pamela Hansford Johnson's, in *The Duchess at Sunset* (the latest programme in the *Imaginary Conversation* series) to take over from Proust the characters of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* and set them down in the Paris of 1941. The difficulties and dangers were obvious, and, while listening, I found the programme by no means easy to assess, so strong were the associations with the novel that the characters inevitably brought with them. In retrospect, however, *The Duchess at Sunset*, seems to me a most successful and exciting programme, and that this should be so I take to be an index not only of the reality of Proust's characters but also of Miss Johnson's literary skill and her tact. What I missed at a first hearing was, of course, precisely the quality Miss Johnson did not pretend to give us. That the Duchess de Guermantes should, as it were be backing all sides for a place, that the Verdurins should be collaborating with the Germans, that Charlus should be a leader in the Resistance movement, all these things were convincing enough; but the atmosphere of Proust, the *recherche du temps perdu* itself in which the whole novel is bathed, was lacking. The clue to Miss Johnson's intention came right at the end of the programme, with Marcel's arranging to go to England. To fight with de Gaulle? No; to write a book, to write, in fact, a book like *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu.* It was then that the illusion Miss Johnson was working for, the illusion that we were eavesdropping on Proust as he made his social rounds before beginning to write his great novel, triumphed. We had been taken behind the book, as it were, and plunged into the raw material out of which Proust made his book. And so thorough was the illusion that even though the events described were quite outside the scope of Proust's experience, it never seemed to matter in the least. If, as I think, Miss Johnson has not written for broadcasting before, then, on the evidence of *The Duchess at Sunset*, she is the most exciting newcomer to the art for a long time.

Other newcomers have shown us their wares in the past few days. *The Devil's Horse*, by Mr. James Helvick and Mr. Randall Swingler, the story of the first balloon ascent in England, made by a young Italian in 1784, had been previously broadcast in the Monday afternoon *First Hearing* series some weeks ago. Fortunately, I heard the earlier production as well, for though the producer Mr. R. D. Smith was the same on both occasions, the quality of the productions seemed to differ enormously. I listened to the first broadcast of *The Devil's Horse* with considerable pleasure; it was gay and light; it danced along. The other evening it was, by comparison, dull and heavy. The script seemed over prepared with introductory matter; I recalled a remark of Mr. Denis Johnston's in a *Critics* programme some time ago, that all radio features gain by having the first page of the script torn away. Was the difference in the quality of the two productions merely a delusion on my part? I do not know; but what was conspicuously absent from the second version was the sense of rhythm, which is essential to the radio play or feature with its succession of tiny scenes. I had the distinct impression that the producer was trying to make a half-hour script play for forty minutes.

The Third Programme feature, *The Rape of the Table*, a dramatised account of Lord Cochrane's attempt to expose the Admiralty Court of Malta in 1811, written by Mr. J. E. Taylor, another name new to me in radio, proved very good fun indeed, an admirable little anecdote from the margin of history. It was played and produced with spirit. But would a naval officer or for that matter anyone else in 1811 have said of someone that he "registered astonishment"? And I could wish that producers would point out to their actors that the word "adieu" has been anglicised for many centuries and is pronounced "adew."

WILLIAM SALTER

THE THEATRE

"Playbill" at the Phoenix

A schoolboy at private tuition is translating the Agamemnon of Aeschylus—inaccurately when it comes to the line "boasting over her husband's body." In his pedantically ironic manner the master corrects his pupil, the pupil retranslates, and in this way, quite unobtrusively, a note is struck four times, the overtones of which will sing through the rest of the play. This is one of the many emotive details with which Mr. Terence Rattigan builds up in *The Browning Version* a more solid and full play than he has yet given us, in spite of its being in only one act. It is the first play in a double bill; the study of an unsuccessful schoolmaster. The schoolmaster has long since died internally; his health has gone; his wife is a hard bitch who is deceiving him, not for the first time. Yet he has managed to retain some last vestiges of himself. He is pedantically exact and scrupulously conscientious; even on the last day of his last term he is giving an outstanding tuition hour. His discipline has remained iron up to the end; one of his painful discoveries this day is that he is known as the Himmler of the Lower Fifth. He had failed from the first to get himself liked, and he has made himself impervious to wanting to be; but the close of the play sees him tentatively regaining touch with himself. His pupil, a very ordinary boy, who persisted in liking him in spite of himself, brings him as a parting present the Agamemnon of Aeschylus in Browning's version. This little second-hand book breaches the dykes the years have dug. He begins to feel again. His horrible wife, as soon as she sees it, tries to plug the gap; but it is, from her point of view, too late. The Browning Version has done its work.

There is no need at this date to praise Mr. Rattigan's skill; that we now take for granted. Up till now it has been mainly used with an easy command over the surfaces. *The Winslow Boy* went one layer deeper (the father was a character with a convincing background). In *The Browning Version* Mr. Rattigan digs down several layers. His schoolmaster is much more than a facile characterisation. It is a rounded character. Schoolmasters seem to lend themselves very easily to sentimentalisation in the hands of popular writers, whether they are treated as successes or failures; but Mr. Rattigan has felt and thought his originally, imaginatively and truly. The part is excellently written and it grows in the memory. For this very reason it stands a little out from the rest of the people in the play, who are "characterisations" rather than characters. The hard wife grasping at her vanishing youth is pencilled in with a few swift strokes; and the boy, whose good manners substitute for feelings, is cleverly observed. And since these two parts are particularly well acted by Miss Mary Ellis and young Mr. Peter Scott, they serve their purpose. But one soon sees the insufficiency of this kind of writing when it comes to the young master whom the wife has seduced. Mr. Hector Ross is not really suited for this part. He cannot add anything to it, as Miss Mary Ellis does to hers, and so the character is a cypher; whereas if the part had been half as fully *written* as Mr. Portman's, something would come through in spite of the mis-casting.

Mr. Eric Portman as the schoolmaster gives one of the brilliant performances of the year. He keeps and holds very exactly the details of the personality, the tics of speech and the uncontrollable jerks of mannerism which a life-time has stamped on the mask; then when he reaches to the moment for the real man to break through (his dazed repetition, for instance, as if he simply can't believe it, of "the Himmler of the Lower Fifth") he triumphantly avoids the mawkish. There is a long progress in quality from the gay frivolity of *French Without Tears* to *The Browning Version*, and Mr. Rattigan will plainly go much further yet. It is a shorter step to *Harlequinade*, the

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second of the two one-acters. This is a green room rag in which Miss Mary Ellis and Mr. Portman have a grand frolic rehearsing *Romeo and Juliet* in the provinces; they are portentously assisted by Miss Marie Löhr as Dame Maud Gosport. There is a great deal of amusing fooling and a measure of waste here. A quarter of an hour's cutting would enormously improve it.

T. C. WORSLEY

THE MOVIES

"Monsieur Vincent," at the Curzon;

"Saraband for Dead Lovers," at the Leicester Square

Only a mile or so of West End streets separates the Tivoli from the Curzon, but the films showing at these two cinemas are worlds apart. At the first will be found *The Miracle of the Bells*, as excruciating a sample of fake religiosity as ever Hollywood devised; its lip-smacking, tongue-in-the-cheek Catholicism should provide the anthropologist of American manners (Mr. Geoffrey Gorer, say, or Mr. Evelyn Waugh) with some horrid titbits. *Monsieur Vincent*, the new film at the Curzon, offers us by contrast a sober, realistic and deeply moving Life of St. Vincent de Paul; and here, for Catholic and non-Catholic alike, is a real miracle of film-making.

Not that *Monsieur Vincent* is without faults. It lasts nearly two hours; it is episodic and now rambles a little and now halts too abruptly; there are moments, particularly near the beginning, when we may wonder whether our journey won't lead round in circles. But any such weaknesses are counterbalanced by the unfailing grasp of the central character, and this is a triumph no less for the director, Maurice Cloche, and the script-writer, Jean Anouilh, than for Pierre Fresnay, who so unexpectedly and magnificently plays the part. He doesn't need explanations; the moment we see him he is *there*—an active, brave, compassionate, rough-shod priest who in his early forties has turned from recognised charities to the enormous, unexplored misery of the very poor. He goes to bury the plague victims in a village where every door is barred and stones are thrown from the windows; he takes the oar of a galley-slave in the Royal Fleet, and founds a hospital for galley-slaves; in Paris he discovers the thousands of souls whose bodies need saving first, founds more hospitals, initiates the Dames de Charité, the Lazarites, homes for foundlings. At each step he has to resist the high offices which his genius brings him and start again to plumb even lower depths. His life is the crystallisation of charity. To say that the film comes up to its lofty theme is to do it no less than justice. We see this man continuously in action (he is an extraordinary worker), but even more we feel his magnetic character which makes the rich and powerful run after him and the starving accept his help as from one of themselves. He grows old before our eyes, takes his energetic, bent walk through the crowded Court, communicates his wisdom to a novice about to go among the poor, and his last words repeat the complaint that he has never done nearly enough. He is a saint, but he is accessible. And hardly less alive and convincing is the terrifying background of poverty, equalled only on the screen—as one critic has discerningly pointed out—by parts of the Gorky trilogy: one scene in hospital where the mutilated show their stumps and the dying fight for a wretched bed to die in, would be almost unbearable in any other context. While it has not been the director's aim to draw attention to a period (the France of Louis XIII), he has made his film as historically accurate, as it is true to the spirit.

Saraband for Dead Lovers goes in for a good deal of period gorgeousness, and there is a life-like if somewhat self-conscious bustle about the Hanoverian Court and the intrigues surrounding the future George I of England. This is an English film pleasant enough to look at, liberally accoutred and well acted in the minor parts, but such incidentals hardly disguise the feebleness of its romance.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

BALLETS DES CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES

Many ballet-goers last year must have missed Vyroubouva's single performance of *La Sylphide*; yet it was the discovery of this young Russian dancer, who bears so astonishing a resemblance to Taglioni as we know her in graphic and literary portraits, and has the same quality of ethereal grace, which inspired Boris Kochno to revive this neglected masterpiece, and to commission Victor Gsovsky to recreate the choreography. The new choreography and decor are based on a close study of contemporary and subsequent material; the original score by Schneitzhoeffer was copied from the archives of the Paris Opera, and Christian Bérard's fascinating Highland costumes were based on Lami's original designs. This year Skorik has hitherto been the only Sylphide, though she is soon to interchange with Riabouchinska. She dances very beautifully and with great nobility, but lacks the elemental grace and flow of movement really needed for the part. Algaroff, in the part of the Scots peasant whom the Sylphide lured away, gives a fine and moving performance, but lacks Petit's gamut of expression. No one has yet replaced Gordon Hamilton, who danced the part of Madge, the Witch, with such wraithlike velocity and malevolence; but Nathalie Philippart, in the part of Effie, the human bride, dances with a yielding and bewildered grace, purity and pride which are altogether bewitching. Someone should really compose a new part for this beautiful dancer; Danaë, in *Les Amours de Jupiter*, showed her to possess a far wider range of emotional expression than generally falls to her part. On the first night of *Jeu de Cartes* Babilée heroically danced his marvellous creation of the Joker with a strained muscle; since, this difficult and mysterious part has been danced by Guélis, admirably as regards technique, but without the right facial mask to match his movements and functions. Babilée too, on the first night, seemed to be overworking his facial muscles; perhaps to relieve the strain elsewhere. It has been instructive to watch *Jeu de Cartes* without Babilée, for it has led one to observe closely the corps-de-ballet. It is really not so good as it was; a certain heaviness seems to have crept into the flirtatious clashes which robs them of their fantastic and unreal character. How interesting it would be to see in succession the choreographic versions of Stravinsky's score by Balanchine, Charrat and Milloss!

I begin, rather tardily, to have an affection for that flippant but not insignificant ballet, *Treize Danses*, and wish I had space to name each of its admirable soloists. But if I name anyone it must be Deryk Mendel, who gives a really brilliant performance of Babilée's part of the Hunchback in *Un Rendez-vous*.

BERYL DE ZOETE

Correspondence

WROCLAW CONGRESS

SIR,—Fadaiev's speech at the Wroclaw Congress was forcible and harsh, but so were the experiences that gave rise to it—the almost incredible heroism and endurance of the siege of Leningrad. Is it surprising that people who have endured such things should not limit their indignation at those who are openly planning to repeat those horrors, or their contempt for those who are too scrupulous to take sides? For underlying the bitterness of the speech was a well constructed argument that was never effectively challenged.

It is no use saying, as Mr. Taylor did, that imperialism and Fascism are catchwords. Nothing has happened to change the old economic causes of imperialism. It is still a fact that all colonies are being exploited by the governments and financial interests in the countries of the Western democracies and that no less than four colonial wars are now being waged. Nor has the need grown less to enforce the dominance of capitalism by demagogic means. The only real change is that by the defeat of the Nazis the centre of reaction has been forced back

The fable of the star-scraper

A certain Simpleton once climbed a high tree after gold, but just as he was reaching out to scrape a star his foot slipped, and he fell. 'Alas!' cried he, 'Now my life must pay for my folly!' With that he came to rest face downward in a midden. 'The gods are with me after all,' said the Star-scraper, as he clambered up an even taller tree.

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until it now coincides with the centre of capitalism itself.

The American century, the American way of life and the persecution of "un-American" activities or even thoughts, are the expression of an organised and powerful force quite consciously aiming at class and world domination. Under the banner of anti-Communism—just as in the old Axis days—the whole American people is being drilled into accepting active participation in a war for complete world domination. Nothing of the old panoply of Fascism is lacking—the cult of brutality, race doctrine, the substitution of loyal labour fronts for anti-capitalist trades unions, the degradation of popular culture, the return to irrationalism and mysticism. But it does not wear the same face. It is now hypocritical rather than cynical; the world has learned something, but not enough; the old goods can still be sold with the new labels of freedom and democracy.

A peace movement that is not an exposure and a fight against the heirs of Fascism and their ideas, is an illusion: worse, it is a diversion of effort that helps the war makers.

If the Wroclaw Congress did nothing but drive this home to intellectuals, it would have served its purpose: but it did far more. What happened behind the formal meetings—the conversations at meals and elsewhere—all contributed to creating for the first time since the war a sense of a new intellectual era.

The tone of this era is still confused, it is that of newly emancipated and still struggling peoples; its atmosphere of urgency and responsibility is most unacceptable to intellectuals in the sheltered countries who long for a quiet time to cultivate their gardens. But it speaks with the voice of our times and if we do not listen it is we who will be the sufferers.

J. D. Bernal

21, Torrington Square, W.C.1.

Sir,—Mr. Stapledon and his associates have become befogged by much signing and unsigning of letters. It is not true that the Russians agreed "to incorporate all the principles of Julian Huxley's resolution." Or rather (as Mr. Stapledon knows) they agreed to the principle of intellectual freedom in the drafting committee and then swindled it out of the resolution as duplicated. They agreed only to call "on the peoples . . . to assist in relaxing restrictions on the free movement of those who serve the cause of peace and progress." In plain English, this means that those of whom the Cominform approves (though not others) should be allowed to work and to travel so far as it suits the convenience of the Cominform.

Take some other Russian "concessions." They wished to describe the democratic forces which won the last war as "the Soviet Union and the heroic popular resistance in countries seized by Fascism" (except, of course, in Yugoslavia). As a "concession" they agreed to include "the peoples of Great Britain and the United States." In other words, the government and people of the Soviet Union are one; the peoples of Great Britain and the United States were at odds with their rulers—those Fascist beasts Churchill and Roosevelt. Again, our present troubles were to be ascribed to "a handful of selfish men in America." As a "concession" the words "and Europe" were added; but in this context (though in no other) Europe does not include Russia.

The "concessions" amount to this. The Communists (not only Russian) state a position which is totally false; they then weaken this position a little and expect others to meet them by accepting a position which is 75 per cent. false. Those who refuse to compromise their intellectual integrity are overwhelmed with abuse. Of these "idiots and imbeciles" (Mr. Ehrenburg's phrase) I am glad to be one.

Magdalen College, Oxford. A. J. P. Taylor

OIL ECONOMY

Sir,—I have followed Critic's remarks on oil economy with interest, and I think I can throw some light on the matter from the practical aspect. I have an even longer record as a motorist than he has, for I started motoring (as a passenger) in 1897 and have held a clean driving licence for nearly 40 years, during which I have driven nearly a million miles.

Now at the moment the engine of my quantity-produced car is being reconditioned after 78,000 miles without a previous rebore. There is no urgent need for this work to be done, for oil consumption was still under 1,000 m.p.g. and the pulling power and acceleration of the engine were both remarkable. It was simply that my trained ear detected the signs of incipient wear in the bearings and these were supported by a small but definite drop in normal oil pressure to about 27lb. So I decided to have the work done.

There is nothing unusual so far as I am concerned in an engine running nearly 80,000 miles without reboring or loss of performance. Most of my engines have done it. The point of interest is that I never changed my oil every 1,000 miles and never intend to do so.

Nevertheless there were certain things that I did do which the average owner-driver does not do. Every 1,000 miles (or once in six weeks) I removed and cleaned the element of my oil pump filter; and every 10,000 miles (or once in six months) I removed and cleaned my sump filter, and also renewed the oil pump filter element entirely, afterwards refilling with fresh oil. The condition of the filters when examined revealed the need for this action, which was not therefore purely precautionary.

Secondly, I regularly cleaned and examined all filters in the petrol supply system, doing this usually when I cleaned the oil pump filter element; and I cleaned the air-conditioner every three months.

Thirdly, I never ran my engine cold but used a muff and stopped, when necessary, to adjust it. A cold engine leads to dilution of oil with petrol, as you doubtless know. It follows from this that I never let a cold engine idle but drive straight away; never let the engine tick over in cold weather unnecessarily; always maintain a condition in which the engine will start straight away, obviating prolonged turning over with the choke out; never keep the choke out a moment longer than necessary.

Fourthly, if by any mischance the engine should have overheated seriously (though of course I never let it overheat to danger point), I changed the oil at the earliest opportunity because one cannot be certain that its viscosity might not have been adversely affected.

Finally, I always kept the sump up to the FULL mark and never ran the engine with it even as low as the NORMAL mark on the dipstick.

I think that the results of this treatment speak for themselves. But how many people do these things? Few, because the jobs of cleaning oil pump filters and sump filters and air conditioners are messy and a bit tricky for the average owner-driver; garages either will not be bothered to do them or charge too much or charge without actually doing any more than change the oil (and how can you check up on them?) Again, the art of keeping an engine warm demands a better appreciation of the working of its mechanism than a non-technical person possesses.

May it not be that car manufacturers, knowing that most owners will not do the things that I have done, advise the really simple thing, viz., change the oil every 1,000 miles as a form of insurance against complaints that their engines are of poor quality rather than in order to sell the oil companies' products for them? When it comes to estimating maximum mileage without oil change, surely (as Joad would say) "it all depends."

Emmer Green, Reading. Arthur J. Simons

AMERICA *v.* BRITAIN

Sir,—I wonder how much Mr. Priestley's opinions are coloured by his own ill-success on the American scene? I believe his description of American influence here to be exaggerated, and I should like to point a parallel within my own experience.

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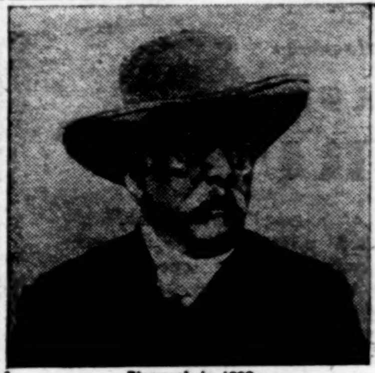

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On my first visit to the United States last autumn and winter I paid a casual visit to a local suburban cinema in Chicago; the two films presented were "None But the Lonely Heart" and a sentimental romance about an historical house in one of London's squares, concluding with its eventual destruction in the blitz. The "alert" and "all clear" rang out strangely in the Middle West, and it was not a busman's holiday I appreciated. Seeking something new, I tried the theatre; it happened to be Tallulah Bankhead in a production of "Private Lives," or, alternatively, the Lunts in "O Mistress Mine," renamed "Love in Idleness" for U.S. audiences. At a leading hotel Florence Desmond was the star of the floor show.

In the papers I found columns devoted to praise of such British films as "Brief Encounter" and "Henry V," and I heard many verbal expressions of admiration for British films. For several weeks I could not open a paper without meeting news of a British Royal Wedding, or British Jet Records, or British Social Planning. I even saw cartoons with British characters in them, and heard U.S. radio comedians burlesquing British types, and on the news-stands I saw prominent displays of papers like the *Daily Express, The Times,* and weeklies like the *New Statesman and Nation.*

In New York I had hoped to enjoy more typically American work in the theatre, but the choice was limited. Broadway seemed overshadowed by British importations; Macbeth, Man and Superman, a Gielgud production of Medea, The Winslow Boy, with familiar names like Michael Redgrave, Wendy Hiller, Jessica Tandy, John Gielgud, to mention but a few. And I should not omit the D'Oyly Carte Company playing Gilbert and Sullivan Operas.

In Chicago I saw a museum display of miniature furniture tableaux representing English and French rooms from the 15th Century to the present day, and there was an exhibition of British paintings, not to mention British pottery and glass. At that time I applauded all this, although I went on asking to be shown things typically American. Now Mr. Priestley sets me a problem, for I see my American friends exposed to a barrage of things un-American. I see Bertrand Russell challenging Liebmann, maybe one day "Jane" challenging "Blondie." There is no end to this thing.

I suggest that if we must have swing then the American style is more invigorating than its English counterpart; that American musical shows are better entertainment than contemporary English musicals; that American humorous writers such as Thurber are masters of their art; and, good as British comedians may be, they pall after years of weekly repetition on radio and halls. The public welcomes new faces, new songs, new stories, and surely Mr. Priestley insults those millions he mentions by supposing they regard the U.S. as a Promised Land because they like to laugh and cry over things American. The time to grow concerned for this England is when fear of outside influences dominates our policy to the extent of attempting to limit their invasion of our lives. When English values cannot stand up to Boogie Woogie and Dick Tracey, then it is a matter of more than concern, but personally I believe the discrimination of the people of this isle will claim and absorb as much as it needs to leaven the home products, and discard the rest, even if personal tastes do not display the same austerity as Mr. Priestley's.

HAZEL M. WALLINGTON

NEWS FROM NOWHERE

SIR,—R. H. S. Crossman, in his review of Glubb Pasha's book on the Arab Legion, mentions the case of Englishmen who "go Arab." On this subject the evidence of T. E. Lawrence is of some importance. The following quotation is from Chapter I of the Seven Pillars of Wisdom: "Pray God that men reading the story will not, for love of the glamour of strangeness, go out to prostitute themselves and their talents in serving another race. A man who gives himself to be a possession of aliens leads a Yahoo life, having bartered his soul to a brute-master. He is not of them. He may stand against them, persuade himself of a mission, batter and twist them into something which they of their own accord would not have been. Then he is exploiting his old environment to press them out of theirs. Or, after my model, he may imitate them so well that they spuriously imitate him back again. Then he is giving away his own environment: pretending to theirs: and pretences are hollow, worthless things."

In that beautiful and terrible first chapter of The Seven Pillars this is the most terrible paragraph: for it gives away the whole book, sums up the whole adventure before it had the chance to be told. The quotation helps one to understand the impossibility of really "going native" and explains, in some measure, why any attempt to do so ends in misfortune.

E. A. KEDOURIE

9, Hillfield Court, N.W.3.

BRITAIN AND GREECE

SIR,—Mr. Richardson's review of my book, *Apple of Discord,* has only just come to my attention, and I should like to acknowledge its courtesy without entering into controversy on matters of opinion. But there is one major matter of fact on which I should like to invite him (and anyone else who may have been misled by his review) to re-read page 156. He quotes me as saying:

> "the suspicion that the British authorities . . . intended to reimpose the monarchy on Greece willy nilly . . . became a certainty in their minds even before it became true."

This quotation runs together two separate sentences and alters one important word in the second. The suspicion which I said became a certainty in their minds even before it became true was a quite different suspicion (concealed in the second spate of dots).

The point is important because Mr. Richardson adds that I do not say how long before this suspicion became true it became a certainty in their minds. There can be no answer to that question, because one of the principal themes of my book is that it was *never* true that the British authorities intended to reimpose the monarchy on Greece willy nilly. Mr. Richardson may think I am wrong about this, but that is no reason to misquote what I said and turn it into something that contradicts the rest of the book.

Incidentally, the policeman from whom I quoted the saying "It was worse than a crime—it was a blunder" was not anyone whom Mr. Richardson met in Athens or anywhere else. It was Fouché, who has been dead more than a century.

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THE CONCERTO

SIR,—In his notice of Mr. Veinus' book on the Concerto your reviewer uses the phrase, "the advent of the composer-performer," with reference to the late 18th century. However applicable this may be to the development of the concerto form, it is surely misleading to suggest that this combination came about so late. On the contrary, it was the normal condition until the late 17th century and this fact is of importance in understanding the loss of an earlier tradition of music, which was due, in a great measure, to the emergence of the professional virtuoso as an interpreter of other men's compositions.

It may be debated that this loss was good or bad for music, but the great fantasies of the period that included men like Ferrabosco, William Lawes, Jenkins and Lock could not have happened without this accepted setting of composer and player as one: the violin works of Nicola Matteis form one of the last examples.

I have no doubt that your reviewer appreciated this, and that he wrote only with reference to the orchestral innovations of the 18th century, but without some qualification the allusion suggests injustice to a period of instrumental music that has only recently been recovered from undeserved oblivion.

GERALD HAYES

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"Dr. Burney is a man for everybody to love. t is but natural to love *him*!" The opinion of Dr. Johnson was evidently shared by society in eneral, for Burney knew everybody and went everywhere; so much in demand was he, that a Hampstead banker named Honeywood thought t worth while to pay him a hundred pounds a ear simply for the pleasure, every Sunday, of is company at dinner. But the passage of time as dealt unkindly with the agreeable doctor; not, ndeed, as a musical historian, for there his importance is undimmed, but as a man of flesh and blood: in the brilliant Streatham circle, among he disputatious personalities of the Literary Club, Burney now seems to cut a modest figure; we catch little more than a murmur of assent, an cquiescent smile. What force of character lay beneath his amiability might have been guessed rom the episode when he rounded on Johnson "in a towering passion" and compelled the Grand Cham to apologise: a scene unique in all Mrs. Thrale's experience. Nevertheless, only the other day Mr. Vulliamy, an authority on the period, decided that Burney must have been something of a bore; and even Virginia Woolf—no authority perhaps, but a clairvoyant of literaure, the most penetrating pair of eyes that ever azed into the past—even Mrs. Woolf confessed erself partially baffled: "it is difficult to be sure what, had one met him now, one would have elt." But Mrs. Woolf was writing before the publication of the complete *Thraliana*, and of he handsome and monumental study of Burney nd his circle by Dr. Percy Scholes.* Dr. Scholes has not, I think, discovered many startling ew facts about his hero, but he has assembled very available scrap of information about the whole Burney milieu with such patient erudition, nd composed the whole story with such wit, kill and downright good sense, that the least erceptive reader begins to feel at home in that ovable household, and to understand why Garick liked to drop in for a chat at the most uneasonable hours of the morning, and why one f the first actions of the aged Johnson, on returnng to London, was to send round his respects to dear Dr. Burney, and all the dear Burneys, ttle and great."

They were what is called a very "family" amily; devoted to one another, absorbed in their ery various interests and occupations, and distilng a general impression of composite happiness which, so far from excluding the outside world, as contagious—and remains so even at this distance of time. In the verbose epitaph which Fanny composed for her father, three ords, "Goodness with Gaiety," sum up the ffect which he made on his contemporaries; the ortrait which emerges from Dr. Scholes's labours llies well with this, and reinforces the general erdict of *Thraliana*. Mrs. Thrale was one of he earliest people to play the fascinating game f marking acquaintances for specific qualities; nd she made free with her noughts. Burney got for Wit, and a bare 3 for Humour (the maxinum was 20); on the other hand, he got 13 for erson & Voice, 15 for General Knowledge, 16 for anners, and 19 for Good Humour. And elsewhere Mrs. Thrale went some way towards correcting e picture: "few People possess such Talents for eneral conversation . . [he] would be called a eep Scholar was he not without Pedantry, as he ould be reckon'd a Wit was he not without alice." And when the company at Streatham ere toying with Goldsmith's notion of everybody eing like something edible, it was agreed that urney most resembled "a dish of fine green a"—a flavour delicate but not insipid.

On those extremely uncomfortable continental urs in search of material for his *General History of Music*, he was never too much occupied settle the origin of the gooseberry, or to observe e doings of Mr. Tunnerstick, of Poole, Dorset, ho was entertaining the city of Dresden by driving a nail through the brain of a horse and then reviving it by "extracting the nail and pouring into the wound a chymical liquor prepared by himself for that purpose." This was not, by the way, an exhibition which Burney would greatly have enjoyed, for the downright eighteenth-century Tory possessed a surprising and attractive vein of humane feeling. In Vienna he was shocked by the ferociously cruel public diversion of animal-baiting; and thirty years later, when he was writing the musical articles for Rees' Cyclopædia and had completed an article on FIFE, he added another on FIFER—simply and solely to drag in a protest against corporal punishment in the Army, the execution of which, he tells us, was a task entrusted to the regimental fifers and drummers, who were consequently nicknamed "Bloody Thumbs." How typical that is of Burney: not only the humanitarianism, but the glorious irrelevance. He had always been addicted to divagatory footnotes and oddments of general information; and by this time the foible had reached proportions which made some of his articles for Rees among the most peculiar ever contributed to a work of reference. Sometimes he scattered his information in a most reprehensible manner, as when he distributed what he had to say on the vocal art (on which he was a great authority) under CANTARE, CHANTER and SINGING, with still another essay on FILER UN SON, at the end of which he suddenly remarks: "We have just now recollected that Agujari was forgotten in the alphabetical order where she ought to have had a niche," and proceeds to insert a full-length article on this famous soprano in the middle of the volume marked EXU to Foo.

These septuagenarian quirks are discussed by Dr. Scholes in one of the most amusing chapters of an amusing book; a first-rate musical encyclopaedist himself, he feels obliged to enter a protest against such irresponsible behaviour, but his own bent is all for digression and miscellaneous information; it is a quality which has evidently endeared Burney to Dr. Scholes, and endears Dr. Scholes to us. Here is a typical instance. Burney's *History of Music* and that of Sir John Hawkins both came out in the same year, so it is natural he should discuss their rival merits, and natural perhaps that he should go on to tell us that Hawkins's publisher was one Tom Payne, of the Mews' Gate. There, surely, most authors would leave the matter, but not Dr. Scholes, who treats us to one of his Burneyan footnotes:

> The Mews' Gate (sometimes called Meux Gate) . . . was in what is now Trafalgar Square, near St. Martin's Church and the entrance to the King's Mews, whose site is now covered by the National Gallery . . . The word "Mews" here means a place where hawks were kept—as they were on this spot from the fourteenth century to the early sixteenth century; then, Henry VIII's stables in Bloomsbury being burned down, his horses were removed here, and so the word "mews" acquired its present horsey application. This by the way! No part of London has been more changed since Burney's time than this part (the demolition that has gone on here is witnessed by the fact that St. Martin's Street now begins with "no. 29") . . .

and so on: exactly the kind of stray information which brings past ages to life, just as it is the curiosities and the odds and ends of gossip which enable us to see and hear the *dramatis personae*. We begin to know James Burney, Fanny's sailor brother who took part in Captain Cook's expeditions, when we learn of his pride in having once made a successful pun in the Otaheitan language ("at first the natives could not make out what he meant, but all at once they discovered the pun and danced round him in transports of joy"). We grasp the single-mindedness of Dr. Burney's brother-in-law, the hard-working agriculturist Arthur Young (who survives as the author of *Travels in France and Italy*) when we discover the inscription which he placed upon his wife's funeral tablet: "the great-grand-daughter of John Allen, Esq., of Lyng House, in the county of Norfolk, the first person, according to the Comte of Boulainvilliers, who there used marl."

Burney's musical importance, by the way, is rather more than that of a pioneer historian, because his life-span of eighty-eight years covered the period of a musical revolution. As a young man he knew Handel; in his old age he possessed (according to his Will) "nearly all the works of Beethoven"; he witnessed the decline of the old polyphonic styles, and the triumph of the new forms of sonata and symphony, which have dominated music ever since. He was always among the progressives, of whom there were plenty in that self-confident age; and it is not surprising that Haydn should have been his ideal composer. To have grasped the point of Beethoven was more remarkable; but the real proof of the width and solidity of Burney's musical judgment appears in his octogenarian excitement at the publication of Bach's Well-tempered Clavier and other important works. To censure Burney for the inadequate treatment of Bach in his *History* is to take too little account of the whole climate of the late eighteenth century, and to neglect the fact that at that time hardly any of Bach's major works had been published. Dr. Scholes is too good a musician to fall into this trap; but even he is misled into smiles and tut-tuts by Burney's passionate enthusiasm for Italian opera and Italian singing. Perhaps this passion disturbs the balance of his *History* from an ideal point of view; but the huge chapter in his last volume devoted to the Italian Opera in England is packed with material of enormous historical value *to us*. We can't begin to understand eighteenth century music (nor even to perform properly the adagio of a Mozart piano concerto) until we realise the predominance of voice and opera in that period; and we can't account for *that* unless we make an effort to imagine the style, the tone and the execution of those great singers, female and *evirati*, whom the Burneys and the whole of musical Europe agreed to admire. Instead of turning away with a phrase about "fashionable pleasures" (just as an unsympathetic future historian might turn away from the present vogue of ballet), it is more profitable to examine what acute and sensitive persons actually said about their idols. Here is Fanny Burney on the Agujari: "then her *shake*—so plump—so true, so open! It is as strong and distinct as Mr. Burney's [her brother] upon the harpsichord." Elderly readers may possibly recall a singer or two whose shake could be described without palpable absurdity as "plump, true and open"; but no one now on earth can have the least impression of *castrato* singing at its best (although a few ancient gramophone records allow us a queer glimpse of the very end of that story, 45 years ago in the Vatican). Let us therefore ponder what Dr. Burney has to say about his particular favourite, Pacchierotti:

> The natural tone of his voice is so interesting, sweet and pathetic, that when he had a long note, or *messa di voce*, I never wished him to change it, or to do anything but swell, diminish, or prolong it in whatever way he pleased, to the utmost limits of his lungs . . . An unbounded fancy, and a power not only of executing the most refined and difficult passages of other singers, but of inventing new embellishments . . . made him, during his long residence here, a new singer to me every time I heard him. If the different degrees of sweetness in musical tones to the ear might be compared to the effects of different flavours on the palate, it would perhaps convey my idea of its perfection by saying that it is as superior to the generality of vocal sweetness as that of the pine apple is, not only to other fruits, but to sugar or treacle. Many voices, though clear and well in tune, are yet insipid and uninteresting, for want of piquancy and flavour. A more perfect shake on short notice, and in every degree of velocity, I never heard.

It was to exhibit such powers and such taste that Handel and his successors wrote; no wonder their operas sound a bit thin when revived for the Third Programme. So long as we are interested in the music of the eighteenth century, we shall always want to consult Dr. Burney; and so long as we are interested in Dr. Burney, we shall want to browse in Dr. Scholes. Across the generations, they are birds of a feather.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

The Great Dr. Burney. By Percy A. Scholes. xford University Press. Two Vols. 63s.

COMMON SENSE

Selected Works of Tom Paine. Edited by HOWARD FAST. *The Bodley Head.* 10s. 6d.

Mr. Howard Fast, who has already written a vivid historical novel about Paine, has now edited a selection of his works, with some additional notes. It will not take the place of the admirable edition in which Mr. Philip Farrer, one of the most promising of the younger American historians, has given us, in two stately volumes, practically everything that is recoverable of Paine's writings. But it gives that mysterious creature, the average reader, a good sense of Paine's quality, and indicates with a good deal of insight some of the complex problems connected with his career.

Paine was 37 years old when he left England for Philadelphia, with a note of introduction from Benjamin Franklin. There was little in his career up till that time which suggests anything of the sudden brilliance of his work. He had, it is true, twice stood up for his fellow Civil Servants in the Excise service; and though that, no doubt, showed courage, nothing that he did on their behalf would have led anyone to assume that he was about to win a reputation in two continents. If he was not a failure in England, it would be impossible to describe him as a success—his emigration looks more like an admission that he had no hope of getting out of the humble routine to which he seemed conditioned.

Yet from the moment he touched American soil he seems to have become a different man. Though more than half his life was already over, there emerged in him new qualities, none of which had even been suspected up to that time. It is not quite true that he had become a member of that inner circle which, on the American side, made the vital decisions in the War of Independence. But it is true that the inner American circle could have ill spared him. No doubt independence would have come if he had never left Great Britain. But *Common Sense* made the decision to seek separation one which it was impossible to escape; it settled what was still undecided in the American mind in the final way. Of the high esteem in which he was held by George Washington and the closest of his colleagues there is not an atom of doubt. He made an effective secretary of the Continental Congress; and no one did more than Paine did to keep opinion steady in times of difficulty.

He was only 46 when the War of Independence came to its victorious close. To the outsider, it would have seemed that, henceforward, he would take his place alongside the outstanding symbols of the American victories. There is, indeed, a brief hour of triumph, but its brevity is more striking than the triumph. By 1787 Paine was frustrated in temper and angry in mind. He set out for England once more, hopeful that he might find the road to fortune with the iron bridge he had invented. He stayed in England until 1792. We do not know the complete history of his activities in those years. We do know that he was well received, that he made friends with William Blake, with Romney the painter, and that he even discussed political questions with Edmund Burke. We know that, when he was in Paris just after the fall of the Bastille, he received from Lafayette the keys of that symbol of despotism to send to Washington as the symbol of freedom. Then a fog surrounds his life, which hardly lifts until his famous reply to Edmund Burke's *Reflections*. Paine's *Rights of Man* is not less remarkable both in power of attack and skill in phrase than any of his American writings. As these had kept the flame of freedom alight in America, so did the *Rights of Man* give heart to the vast band of men in England who hoped that 1789 might be an end, for them also, of the close oligarchy whose rule Pitt and George III combined to impose. Had he not been given that magic warning by Blake, and set off for France but a few hours before Pitt's agents sought his arrest, he might well have been the most famous victim of Pitt's conspiracy mania. As it was, his years in France brought him within sight of death; and there are few more degrading episodes than the callous indifference of the American Minister, Gouverneur Morris, to his fate. His release was due rather to Thermidor than to the pressure of Morris's successor, James Monroe. It was a broken man who returned to the United States to find there neither welcome nor even charity, but the passionate and malicious ingratitude of men who could not forgive him for the honest and sturdy directness of his *Age of Reason.* The last chapter of his life is a shabby and bitter drift to loneliness and disappointment. Those who owed him most seemed among the first to desert him. The misery of those years is as deep as its explanation is difficult. For a century after, moreover, enthusiasm for Paine was the passport to disfavour wherever respectability mattered in the United States.

There is no praise too high for the vividness of Paine's tracts, the eloquence and pungency of his style, the ingenuity with which he goes directly to the heart of the matter with which he deals, the skill with which he holds the attention of his readers. But it is a pity that Mr. Fast, in his natural desire to exalt the reputation of Paine, should think it necessary to suggest that Burke's *Reflections* are "nearly forgotten" and that the "one-time friend of progress" should be described as "one-sided," "narrow," guilty of "as reactionary a set of reflections as ever a so-called Liberal set down." The truth, of course, is that Burke was never a Liberal, and that he was hostile to the French, for the same reasons that he was favourable to the American, Revolution. Most people would agree to-day that Paine was right and Burke was wrong on the immediate issues over which they fought. But most people would, I think, agree not only that the *Reflections* is, with all its rhetoric and its emotionalism, by far the soundest criticism of the French Revolution made by any of its contemporaries, but also that it touches depths of insight into the nature of politics far beyond the capacity of Paine to attempt, much less to rival. The faults of Burke are grave, but the wisdom of Burke is not less remarkable than his faults. Mr. Fast might well look up the famous essay of Hazlitt in which that prince of critics, as good a Radical as Mr. Fast could wish for, said that the capacity to admire Burke was one of the tests by which he judged the capacity of a man for serious political thinking. If Mr. Fast really thinks that "Burke set a precedent in conscious, manufactured falsehood and calumny of a people's movement that has been dutifully followed even to this day," it can only be said regretfully that he knows little of Burke, and less of the precedents of which he speaks.

It is much better to assert quite simply that Tom Paine has never lost his place as the author of four, at least, of the supreme popular pamphlets of modern times. Each of them was, in fact, a great battle won so completely that all who came after him inherited the great consequences of his victories. It is folly to belittle Paine, to whom the debt of every progressive thinker is enormous. But a great pamphleteer is not necessarily a great political philosopher. That is the mistake Mr. Fast makes in his notes to his anthology. He sees only one side of the picture, and only part of that side. He writes as though all politics was the choice between black and white. It really is not so, though eager partisans seek to make it so. I doubt whether Mr. Fast is really so simple as his editing here makes him appear. And if, as I suggest, he is not, he ought to have given his whole mind to his readers. If Mr. Fast will think it over, I believe he will come to agree with Cromwell that the artist must not omit to paint the warts on his sitters' faces. When one deals with an epoch of conflict as grave as that in which Paine participated so nobly, the annotation ought to serve truth and not the private predilections of a party; but perhaps I attribute to prejudice in Mr. Fast what is, in fact, an ignorance of which he took no pains to rid himself.

HAROLD J. LASKI

A POET'S PROSE

The Prose of Edward Thomas. Selected by Roland Gant. *Falcon Press.* 10s. 6d.

"Though," said Edward Thomas in one of his later books, "I am a writing animal and could write something or other about a broomstick, I do not write with ease." Nearly twenty years of his life were spent in literary hackwork—essays, reviews, biographies, always written with intense care, and always against time. His poems belong to the two years before his death in action; their range is not wide, yet some of them are the most perfect and enduring of English verse of that quarter century. Not a line of it was written before Thomas was thirty-six, when the war of 1914, by depriving him of other work, and then giving him as a soldier the freedom of losing his freedom, let him discover himself as a writer. Early marriage and children, a need to write yet a feeling that he was not *inventive,* had made him up to this time toil at one exhausting literary commission after another.

> One thing remains the same—this my right hand
> Crawling crab-like over the clear white page,
> Resting awhile each morning on the pillow,
> Then once more starting to crawl on towards age.

So he wrote in one of those retrospective poems in which he re-lived the black bitterness and self-reproach of those years.

Of how much value was this work—there is a great deal of it—from which Mr. Gant has made his prose selection? Apart from some of the letters (too few, I think), the extracts range from Thomas's first published book—a nature diary made when he was seventeen—to his last prose work, a strange, austere account of his childhood. These two were written for his pleasure, but little else. (*Oxford,* for instance, was a commissioned book of 60,000 words, to be finished in four months; *Wales* was the same.) Yet, curiously, there is no sign of haste in these passages. The sentences, with their level distinction of style and thought, cannot even be read quickly. Possibly it is not the speed of the eye but of hearing that they demand. Reading thus tranquilly we may be held often by a phrase: "A raven croaked with a fat voice." "A candied violet sky in the twilight without any wind." "That uncertainty in character which is called conscience in the good and timidity in the bad." "Men wonder what they have done to deserve his withering respect." "As I saw (in Oxford) the sea of roofs and horned turrets and spires I knew that, although architecture is a dead language, here at least it speaks strongly and clearly, pompous as Latin, subtle as Greek." But this is the wrong approach, for he was not a man of artful sentences or curious vocabulary. A page of his prose does not flash to the eye. It is not unlike the English rural landscape that is so often its subject—clear, contained, unemphatic (though sometimes with a calm wildness), never far from people, whether the living or the historic dead, rooted in tradition, not in detail remarkable, but unmistakable. It has for an anthology this merit (perhaps a demerit, rather), that a typical passage is easy to find, but not a striking one.

I prefer those in which he writes of people, for here his sensibility becomes focused; his innkeepers and children, his watercress man who paints sixpenny landscapes, always putting in a few red flowers for value, his colonel in the railway carriage—they are vivid in the framework of the encounter. As a critic he is honest and penetrating, never casual. He achieves cleverness without intent, as in his summing-up of Maeterlinck, a kind of duel of praise and dispraise. There are other instances of his detachment from the fashions of his day. He has a grave and private humour; I can remember nothing in his essays more delightful than the description in *The Icknield Way* of pictures on a bedroom wall. A part of this (*The Angel*) is quoted in the anthology. But the undercurrent of bitterness or melancholy is hardly ever silent; often rising to the surface, as in a terrible cold account of his feud as a boy with his brother, or of his sense of annihilation during a rainstorm on a black summer night.

Still, I doubt if this is a satisfactory book for the stranger to Edward Thomas. Such a reader, it seems to me, will not at once be drawn to these half-essays and lopped passages, bare of any commentary or information apart from the brief bibliography at the end, and the graceful and dignified introduction by Mrs. Thomas. But a sentence in the Jefferies essay provides a key for those who know Thomas's story. It is on the power of using words. "Nothing is more mysterious than this power," Thomas writes. "It is the supreme proof, above beauty, physical strength, intelligence, that a man or woman lives." A bold statement. It should be possible, too, to see how he made his way through and finally out of books, and to recognise thoughts and experiences that later took the form of poetry. This book at least shows that Edward Thomas was all the time writing on the borders of poetry. It is not poetic prose; it is a poet's prose.

NAOMI LEWIS

UNDER FRANCO

Sleepless Spain. By VICTOR ALBA. *Cobbett Press.* *8s. 6d.*

The most sinister and tragic attribute of absolute power is that it corrupts absolutely not merely the tyrant but the victims of his tyranny. When the Spanish Republic, betrayed by its own democratic inhibitions, went down before Franco's Moors, the civilised States of Europe, with their policy of "non-intervention," acquiesced—and still acquiesce—in the oppression of the Spanish people by a dictatorship which has combined uniquely the qualities of cunning, cruelty and stupidity. It is ten years now since the Pyrenees became an Iberian "iron curtain" behind which clerical Fascism has had full scope to recreate the Black Spain of Torquemada. In its repulsive record, the packed prisons, the tortures, the scores of thousands of judicial murders are not the vilest feature: for the active members of the (never quite broken) resistance there was always "still time to die." The supreme crime committed against humanity by the Falange and its posturing Caudillo is that they have stupefied a nation and infected it with their own corruption.

Victor Alba, whose heart-rending little book (first published last year in Paris) has been brilliantly translated by Charles Duff, is a Spanish journalist who spent seven years—with intervals of prison and concentration camp—on the run in Franco Spain. Those who knew and loved Spain between the wars, yet (like the present reviewer) held back selfishly from "premature anti-Fascism" while better men fought, will read his pages with the taste of bile on their lips. For in these accounts, moving in their simplicity, of ordinary Spanish people—a few heroic, some base, nearly all in their different ways frustrated and disillusioned—there is built up an indictment of Iberian Fascism more terrible than any conveyed by statistics of executions or terror. Here, set down unemotionally and with transparent honesty, is the tragic truth about Franco's asphyxiating New Order, in which there is not much bread but more frequent *corridas* than ever before; secure luxury for the 9,000 landlords who own one-fifth of Spain's cultivated land; unending toil on a bare subsistence level for miners, peasants and factory workers; and, permeating trade, officialdom and the poverty of the streets, the morality of the black market.

In this Spain, dominated by a Church which has co-operated with the Falange in stifling knowledge and intellectual freedom, fortunes have been amassed, and millions lavished on pretentious public buildings, while the common people—cut off from the news and culture of the rest of Western Europe—have starved in slums. Of the consequences to individuals Victor Alba is a vivid *rapporteur*. The ultimate consequences to Europe of allowing Fascism to survive in Spain have yet to be measured. AYLMER VALLANCE

NEW NOVELS

Joy. By GEORGES BERNANOS. *The Bodley Head.* *9s. 6d.*

The Blood of Others. By SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR. *Secker & Warburg: Lindsay Drummond.* *10s. 6d.*

The Borgia Testament. By NIGEL BALCHIN. *Collins.* *9s. 6d.*

The religious novel is now so entirely Roman Catholic that, for readers of modern fiction, the words "religious" and "Roman" have become almost synonymous. It is not, I trust, merely a survival of my early anti-Catholic conditioning which makes me regret this. It would be exciting to read, for a change, a novel describing religious experience in Protestant terms, for, with Catholic fiction, I am conscious all the time of a barrier never wholly surmountable, the barrier of a tradition I do not share. I find this particularly so with the novels of M. Bernanos. A novel such as *Joy* is utterly inconceivable in terms of English protestantism, for M. Bernanos writes from the very centre of French Catholicism. *Joy* is a study of sainthood. His heroine, Chantal de Clergerie, is a girl in her late teens who has lived all her life in a state of "humble felicity":

> Long before she confided in anyone, before she had been aware of it herself, poverty, a supernatural, fundamental poverty, had shone over her childhood like a little friendly star with a soft and steady light. As far back as she could remember the exquisite feeling of her own weakness had been a great comfort to her and a marvellous consolation. It seemed to her like an ineffable sign of the presence of God, God himself who shone in her heart. She believed that she had never desired anything beyond her power to accomplish, and yet, any effort in the end was always easier than she had anticipated, as though divine compassion had miraculously gone before.

But by the time the book begins this state of "humble felicity" is already clouded over. Her confessor, who understood her, has died; she has become aware that she is somehow an affront, a challenge, to others, to her successful mediocrity of a father, a historian whose ambition it is to become a member of the Academy, to the Russian chauffeur Fiodor, the representative in the novel of conscious evil; above all, she is awaiting a mystical experience of God. The mystical experience is most powerfully described; Chantal's vision of Judas on the gallows has a quite horrifying intensity. Bernanos, it seems to me, is the literary equivalent of Rouault in painting. But, as a work of art, *Joy* is not wholly a success. Who wants a saint about the house? Such, roughly, is the attitude of most of the characters toward Chantal. But simply because Chantal is so very much the centre of M. Bernanos' picture, the sinners are inadequately rendered. There is a failure, inevitable perhaps, in the novelist's sympathy: it is as though M. Bernanos cannot be bothered with them. This may not be true of the Abbé Cénabre, the priest who has lost his faith, but it seriously impairs the studies of M. de Clergerie, who is a contemptible person depicted with contempt, of Fiodor, who seems to me no more than a lay figure of evil, and of the psychiatrist La Pérouse, who interprets Chantal's saintliness as the sublimation of hereditary neurosis. And the dénouement, the murder of Chantal by Fiodor, required, I think, much greater preparation. But as a study of one kind of saint *Joy* is strikingly convincing. The translation, by Louise Varese, is for the most part very good indeed; but the dialogue between the servants is rendered

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& WINDUS

in a language neither quite English nor quite American.

Its translators describe *The Blood of Others*, intimidatingly, as " the first full-length novel to embody almost every concept of the Sartre-de Beauvoir school of philosophy." It is not necessarily a recommendation and, in fact, the book is successful rather as exegesis—it is most brilliantly that—than as a novel. M. Bernanos' Chantal says : " We can no more escape from one another than we can escape from God. We have one thing in common, only one, and that is sin." Mlle. de Beauvoir would agree that we cannot escape from one another, but as an Existentialist she does not believe in God, and what her characters have in common one with another is not sin but guilt, which is altogether more drab. Existentialism is a most interesting attempt to enjoy the ardours and endurances of religious experience without having religion itself. Mlle. de Beauvoir's hero, Jean Blomart, could not suffer more keenly from moral anguish if he lived in one of Bernanos' novels, though he has freed himself from what to him would doubtless seem superstition. When the novel opens he is a Resistance leader at the bedside of a dying girl who has been shot while rescuing a comrade from the Germans, and technically the novel is a series of flashbacks in which Blomart re-lives his past. Born a bourgeois, he has renounced his heritage at an early age to live as a workman. For years he has lived in terror of the consequences of his actions. He has, for instance, left the Communist Party because his influence over a young friend has led to the young man's being killed. Similarly, he has been unwilling to accept the love of the heroine Helen. " Each of us is responsible for everything and to every human being " : the realisation of the truth—if it is a truth—of Dostoevsky's words sets up in him a paralysis of the will from which he is not free until he is faced with the necessity of choosing whether to join the Resistance or to collaborate with the Germans. Only then can he say, looking at Helen's dead body : " You have given me the courage to accept for ever the risk and the anguish, to bear my crimes and my guilt which will rend me eternally," (though, since Existentialism of Mlle. de Beauvoir's kind is atheistic, presumably " eternally " is not to be taken literally).

Of Mlle. de Beauvoir's literary ability there can be no question. But as a novel *The Blood of Others* is altogether too neat and pat. Like all the Existentialist work I have read or seen, M. Sartre's *Crime Passionnel* excepted, it strikes me as the ingenious working out of an intellectual proposition. It would, I think, be impossible to be interested in the characters apart from the ideas they represent. Mlle. de Beauvoir has been admirably served by her translators, Miss Yvonne Moyse and Mr. Roger Senhouse, except for their preposterous note at the beginning of the novel describing the author's " technical innovations." These are non-existent : Mlle. de Beauvoir's methods have been commonplace in English and American fiction for the past twenty-five years.

The Borgia Testament seems to me only dubiously a novel. Mr. Balchin gives us what purports to be the autobiography and self-justification of Cesare Borgia, set down during his imprisonment by Cardinal della Rovere. The book is written with all the pace and narrative skill one takes for granted in Mr. Balchin : it is a very vivid reconstruction of the Italy of the Borgias, so much so that one could well believe that in a previous existence Mr. Balchin occupied a small back room in the Vatican of Pope Alexander VI and advised Cesare on siege-warfare. I do not know whether his interpretation of Cesare Borgia would be acceptable to scholars ; certainly I found it convincing. But by choosing as his central character a historical personage of the first importance Mr. Balchin has fallen into one of the traps that beset historical novelists : having finished the novel one wants to go to the sources to find out whether the interpretation of the hero is correct. One is less interested in the book as a novel than as a biography, and the novelist's truth differs in kind from the biographer's or historian's. It is impertinent to write an author's novel for him, but I believe that Mr. Balchin would have produced a more satisfying novel if he had exhibited Cesare to us through the eyes of a minor figure, of a character existing only on the margin of history, through the eyes, for instance, of Cesare's secretary Agapito.

WALTER ALLEN

THE CHINESE

A Short History of the Chinese People. By L. CARRINGTON GOODRICH. *Allen & Unwin.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

This book is an attempt to give a comprehensive picture of the Chinese people from the beginning to the present day. History began to be written in China about 1,500 B.C. ; and Professor Goodrich has had to pack his space. His narrative covers not only the ups and downs of dynasties, but also the evolution of national life and thought. He makes good use of the achievements in modern archæological research, and throws light on some debatable parts of ancient Chinese history. Of special interest is his account of foreign invasions and of China's contact with other Asiatic and European countries.

The term " Chinese " derives from the name of a dynasty, Chin (221-207 B.C.), whose power extended beyond Central Asia ; it therefore denotes a civilisation rather than a race. Since the end of the Shang Dynasty (*ca* 1523-1027 B.C.) built by a comparatively civilised people living in the Yellow River Valley, Chinese history has been periodically interspersed with conquests by barbarians. Each conquest, however, invariably resulted in expansion for the Chinese, for the invaders were always absorbed. The Chinese (converted " barbarians " as well) have ascribed this to the superiority of their culture, and have seemed quite pleased about it. " I am happy," said Shao Yung (1011-1077), a mathematician, " because I am a human, and not an animal ; a male, and not a female ; a Chinese, and not a barbarian, and because I live in Loyang, the most wonderful city in all the world." Similar remarks have been attributed to Jung Chi-ch'i, a contemporary of Confucius ; and, incidentally, also to Plato, and to Socrates.

This happy attitude enabled the ancient Chinese to face alien cultures with self-confidence rather than with hostility and fear, and eventually to assimilate them. Thus Buddhism was adopted and Islam accepted side by side with Confucianism and Taoism. When the Nestorian branch of the Christian Church was introduced to China in A.D. 635 the court gave the cult a blessing : " The meaning of the teaching has been carefully examined : it is mysterious, wonderful, calm ; it fixes the essentials of life and perfection ; it is the salvation of living beings ; it is the wealth of man. It is right that it should spread through the empire. Therefore let the local officials build a monastery in the I-ning quarter with twenty-one regular monks." Somehow this new religion did not spread. Had it succeeded as Buddhism did, one might wonder what would have become of the Chinese during later centuries.

The only " barbarians " whom the Chinese found it awkward to tackle and with whom he has got into great trouble, are the Westerners with their Capitalism, and, later on, Communism. Can he assimilate these new systems in time as he did many others in the past ? Professor Goodrich is cautiously silent on this point

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Nor does he answer the interesting question which he asks himself in the preface: With is remarkable achievements in mathematics, ngineering, architecture and historical criticism, why did the Chinese not arrive at a fully ounded scientific method? Perhaps Professor Goodrich is contemplating a reply in a second olume.

CHUN-CHAN YEH

COMICS

Here and Now. By J. B. MORTON ("Beachcomber"). *Hollis and Carter.* 9s.

Benchley—Or Else! By ROBERT BENCHLEY. *Dennis Dobson.* 8s. 6d.

Buying a funny book is not quite like listening o a funny radio programme. Listening, you ardly expects more from a joke than its immediate mpact. Timing is all but all; and you laugh oudly at many things which would seem dreary f read in the original script. But to buy a book s to be involved in an acquaintance with its uthor; and if you find yourself disliking his ersonality or his views, or both, you may cease o enjoy his jokes, even if they amused considerbly at first glance; if, on the other hand, you nd yourself in touch with an amiable and sympaetic character, you may be won over to the njoyment of a style of humour which seemed, s you flipped pages in the bookshop, whimsical, iresome and not very funny.

The bits by Mr. Morton in *Here and Now* are xtracted from his column "By the Way," ublished in the *Daily Express*. They are, as ne might expect, short, sharp and roughly ointed. His jokes, glanced at perhaps once at he breakfast table, in train, bus or office, must trike and strike quickly. He flings out puns and rotesque names to batter you in a sentence or n two sentences. This, from the standpoint of he more leisurely reader, is a blemish on his method; but it can be discounted. Less easy o discount are the pride and stupid bad manners with which he airs very silly views. Psychiatry, modern poetry and painting, co-education, ballet, overnment planning—all such are anathema to im. A sensible reader could agree very well, f it were only the pretentious excrescences which Mr. Morton snapped at (it is sometimes); but he style of invective shows that blind and angry rejudice, supported by ignorance, is here his hosen guide. He has, too, a terrible swashuckling vein:

> . . . like many a dark wine of no more than local fame, Irouléguy is a deceiver. He comes on gently for the first four or five litres, and then gives a kick like a mule. . . .

Mr. Morton loves to present himself, by contrast with the modern "niminy-piminy," as a braggart of the taverns, "marching" (always marching) through Provençal valleys "with my great staff Durandal." This deep-chested baying should divert some readers from him.

All that said, "Beachcomber" is a very remarkable comic writer. At his funniest he is very, very funny. He has a wonderful gift for creating, in the fewest words, caricature figures, whose antics, without being too tiresomely topical, have the air of belonging in this "Alice-in-Wonderland country," as D. H. Lawrence once called England; and in Captain de Courcy Foulenough, Dr. Smart-Allick of Narkover, Dr. Strabismus (Whom God Preserve) of Utrecht, and others, we have a gallery of March Hares, White Rabbits and Mad Hatters, got up with mortar-boards, laboratory equipments, marked cards, and office desks. They seem to me extraordinarily authentic and quite likely to last. There is here Mrs. Florence McGurgle, a landlady who thinks to benefit the tourist trade by imparting Continental touches to her seaside boarding-house—re-named "Hôtel McGurgle et de l'Univers"—but saddened by an interview with her new cook, Mrs. Trudge, who "has twice made a day trip to Boulogne."

> "As to soups—," began Mrs. McGurgle. "Same as sauces," said Ma Trudge, "out of the bottle or the packet. And none of your ladida liquids with all the letters of the alphabet floating in 'em." "I was thinking of Consomays—" "Oh, you can call 'em what you like, Mum. You give me the packet and I'll make the soup. What you call it is no affair of mine." "But don't you remember any soups you had in Boulogne, Mrs. Trudge?" "Soups? D'you think I went there to drink soups? Not me. We took a flask o' tea, some bullseyes, a packet of chips, a few sardines, and two bars of chocolate cream. Soups!"

From Apemantus to Biron. I don't know where Mr. Benchley's pieces first appeared, but they have a cut and stamp of elegant leisure. A suaver, better-mannered writer, as near to the night club as Beachcomber to the music hall, he takes far more space to make a point, and doesn't always make one. He may present himself as the incompetent blunderer, who has to be left out of parlour games; but we remain convinced that he is in fact a distinguished dilettante, invited to all the best parties and going to most; as an annotator of embarrassing socialite moments—having no one to talk to at dinner, being unable to "toddle along" from a party—he is very good. Whereas one can isolate the nasty elements in "Beachcomber," and still enjoy the rest, Mr. Benchley remains all of a piece; he does not create characters, except his own, which he spins and spins with whimsical amiability. If you don't succeed in liking this urbane mask, you won't get much pleasure from reading Mr. Benchley. I found myself pretty resistant to it; and only began to break down on p. 173, where there is a sketch called "Toning Down the News," which makes pleasing fun with styles of crime-reporting in French newspapers:—

> This genius for understatement continues in an account of a young man who found himself blown into two or three dozen pieces by an *engin explosif*, an accident which moved the rewrite man of the *Courrier* to refer to him as "unlucky." Possibly a maniac who had butchered four or five people in a blind rage might be said to have "got out of the wrong side of the bed that morning."

In fact Mr. Benchley is best when he has matter other than just that of his own foibles (about which he can be shockingly arch); "Route Nationale 14—How to Motor from Cherbourg to Antibes via Cherbourg," keeps one tittering for seven pages. Of his exercises in self-analysis I liked best "Take the Witness!" in which he imagines himself scoring brilliantly under relentless cross-examination. He can be as foolish about "culture" as Mr. Morton, though never so bumptiously boorish.

To judge from these books, the urbane American Biron (courtier without a court) would be a less alarming person to find at a party than the churlish British Apemantus. But when it comes to a question of sixpences . . . Apemantus earns mine.

MARK OGILVIE

Little Reviews Anthology, 1947-8. Edited by DENYS VAL BAKER. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 10s 6d.

On the whole, the poems in this anthology show the fading of the social realism and classicism of the 'thirties and early 'forties, so that a poem like Leslie Norris's *In Merthyr Now (Wales)*, written in the mood of that time, comes almost as a shock. There is a pleasing verbalist poem by F. T. Prince *(Penguin New Writing)*, a good, precisely imaged poem, *Regent's Park*, by Charles Madge *(Bell)*; Adam Drinnan's poem, *To Fame (Poetry Scotland)* is original, as is most of this poet's work. Several poems show how bad can be the influence of a good poet—in this case Dylan Thomas; the echoes of his rhythms and coined adjectives are not necessary to the poems in which they occur.

Two of the best critical essays are on religious atti-

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METHUEN

tudes; R. C. Churchill is shrewdly ironic on C. S. Lewis and Dorothy Sayers as religious propagandists who have tried to turn faith into fact—*The Christian Literary Revival (Polemic);* and with this may be read Donat O'Donnell's essay on the "rearguard Catholicism" of Evelyn Waugh *(Bell)*. The editor of *Little Reviews Anthology* suggests that in the little reviews one may discover trends in writing more accurately than in established periodicals—for economic reasons; and so far, one might say that the contents do indicate a trend away from realism, already mentioned—although R. C. Churchill and Donat O'Donnell are against the subject they write about, the interest is still there. Philip Toynbee's assessment of that most subjective and imaginative of writers, Virginia Woolf, is also reprinted (from *Horizon*).

However, the stories in the volume show a hard core of realism, in Jim Phelan's *Life Line (Penguin New Writing)*, in James Hanley's *The Road (Windmill)*, and in Liam O'Flaherty's *The Touch (Irish Writing)* that has a lyrical quality not present in his novels. Away from these is Denton Welch's visual and evocative prose about a child's contact with death, *The Coffin on the Hill (Life and Letters)*.

The anthology is concerned only with writing: there are no essays on the visual arts or on music.

Week-end Competitions

No. 970

Set by V. S. Pritchett

Ideological chess: Competitors are asked to re-christen the men, describe moves appropriate to them and the situations that would arise in the game. Length up to 200 words. Entries by September 28th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 967

Set by Giles Romilly

Competitors will recall Sir Walter Raleigh's poem which begins:

I wish I liked the human race,
I wish I liked its silly face.

Six guineas are offered for an irascible outburst of the same length and in the same form, on any one of the following occasions: "First looking into Chapman's Homer"; "Standing on Westminster Bridge"; meeting "La Belle Dame sans Merci"; attending "The Grammarian's Funeral"; "Going down to the Sea again."

Report by Giles Romilly

There were a number of witty entries for this competition whose high standard made others the more disappointing. Sir Walter's lines are deceivingly simple and it is not quite so easy to catch the spirit of them as it appears. A good many competitors disqualified themselves by sending two lines or four; one sent a fourteen line poem describing an extremely gloomy visit to an aunt in St. Thomas's Hospital. The "Belle Dame" attracted the most and also the most savage entries. No one seemed prepared to exchange their British rations for roots and manna-dew. On the whole the women competitors were more vindictive about her than the men—though none went quite so far as Gordon Melville, who unchivalrously threatened to "use my fist" on her wild, wild, eyes. D. R. Barclay, who concluded an amusing complaint with

But what spoilt my whole attitude
Was her crazy ideas about food

unfortunately wandered too far from Raleigh's metre. An excellent "Grammarian" came from Henry J. Murphy, whose last couplet struck the right note exactly. To him and to E. W. Fordham for the best of the "Belle Dame" I award prizes of two guineas. A guinea to Alan Burscough for a pretty twist to the "Westminster Bridge" theme; another to K. M. for his Chapman with a satisfactorily savage ending. Of many other good entries I select for quotation those of Willy Tadpole, Percy Vere, and Ellen Evans. Honourable mentions to Kim, Charles Higham, Mespil, Laurence Fowler, J.E., and G. McD. Wilson, whose excellent "Down to the Sea Again" is unfortunately just not quotable.

ON ATTENDING "THE GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL."

I wish I liked grammarians,
And particles like De's and An's.
Although he helped to settle Hoti,
To learn it nearly drove me potty.
And so, he "properly based Oun"!
Come, hurry, let the body down.

HENRY J. MURPHY.

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ON MEETING LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

I wish I thought that manna dew
Were half as good as Irish stew.
I wish I thought this faery's child
Would serve me with a pint of mild.
And when a *belle dame* makes sweet moan
I wish she'ld make it all alone.

E. W. FORDHAM.

ON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

I wish I found Westminster fair,
I wish I saw the smokeless air,
I wish—by God, the wish how deep!—
The very houses *were* asleep
Instead of being full of bats
In brains of busy bureaucrats.

ALAN BURSCOUGH.

CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

I wish I'd read all Homer through
I wish just "nodding terms" would do,
And if I knew Greek really well,
I'd wish this Chapman's wares in hell.
I wish I were a true barbarian
To chuck them from a peak in Darien.

K. M.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

I wish I loved the sidelong glance
Of ladies who are born in France,
I wish I loved the elfin grot
But, to be candid, I do not.
In future, Johnny, please discard
These ladies of the Boulevard.

WILLY TADPOLE.

LOOKING ASKANCE AT CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

I wish I loved these realms of gold;
I wish I loved the loud and bold;
I wish I followed Johnny Keats
In liking Chapman's metric feats;
And when I make a wild surmise
I wish it wasn't *Damn His Eyes!*

PERCY VERE.

ON MEETING LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI.

I wish I liked to hear you moan;
And longed to plait a blooming zone;
I wish I liked to sit in grots;
I wish I loved to eat shallots;
I wish I craved to kiss wild eyes;
I wish I liked daft lullabies.

ELLEN EVANS.

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s to a man between 18 and 50 inclusive or
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r she is excepted from the provision of the
trol of Engagement Order, 1947, or the
ncy is for employment excepted from the
ision of that Order.

DAN Government reqs. a man with con-
iderable practical exp. of Trade Unions
f. a barrister or solicitor) to fill the post
Registrar of Trade Unions in the Legal De-
ment. Candidates must be over 30. Duties
generally to direct and supervise the for-
ion and development of Trade Unions and
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a Short Term Contract for two years at a
ry between £E1,000 and £E1,600 p.a.
rding to age, exp. and qualifics. A cost of
ng allowance from £E180 to £E390 p.a.
rding to number of dependents is at pre-
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t. Strict medical exam. (£E1 = £1 0s. 6d.)
ther information obtainable from the Sudan
ernment Agency, Wellington House, Buck-
am Gate, London, S.W.1. Please mark
elopes "Registrar."

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to Orchestral Manager. The duties of post
ude the supervision of the routine office
k for the administration of the Symphony
hestra and Theatre Orchestra. The ability
deal with a large volume of detailed and
icate paper work is essential. Candidates
t have knowl. of instrumentation and be
to read a score and to understand the
tical implications of assembling players for
orchestral performance. Some exp.; either
n orchestral player or librarian, an advan-
. Sal. on scale rising by annual increments
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Aid to Forces Education in the Extra-
ral area of the University of Leeds will be
nised by the University jointly with the
E.A. and the L.E.A.'s concerned. Applics.
ted by University for following Lecture-
s (to be effective from Jan. 1, 1949) on
scale £550-£25-£900 p.a.; in each case
Lecturer's duties will be wholly concerned
Civilian Aid to Forces Education in the
: (a) 1 Lecturer with qualifics. in Educa-
, for work in connection with the training
R.A.E.C. Instructors, &c. (b) 2 Lecturers,
will be reqd. to reside at or nr. Catterick
p; one should have good Honours degree
Science and the other have qualifics. in
nomics, Political Science, Modern History
English Literature. Applics., together with
es of 3 refs., to reach Registrar, Univer-
, Leeds, 2 (from whom further partics. ob-
able) by Oct. 11.

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Mural Studies. Applics. invited for post
Assistant to Director of Extra-Mural Studies
n initial sal. on scale £550-£25-£900 p.a.,
rding to qualifics. and exp. The work will
concerned wholly with Civilian Aid to
es Education. Candidates should have
l Honours degree and pref. will be given
those with admin. exp. and/or exp. of
es Education. Applics. to reach Regis-
, University, Leeds, 2 (from whom further
ics. may be obtained) by October 11.

ORKERS' Educ. Assoc., Yorkshire North
Dist. Applics. invited (from men and
en) for posts of organising Tutors for
-time work in connection with the scheme
Civilian Aid to Forces Education which the
E.A. is undertaking in co-operation with
University of Leeds. Sal. scale £400-£25-
o p.a. Commencing date Jan. 1, 1949. One
ointment will be for courses in the Appre-
on of Music. Four appointments will be
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h District Secretary, W.E.A., Blenheim
itute, Blackman Lane, Leeds, 2 (from
m further partics. obtainable), by Oct. 11.

AMPSHIRE County Council. Child Guid-
ance Service. Applics. for post of a
le-time Psychologist are invited from men
omen with a University Degree or Diploma
Psychology, pref. with exp. in Child Guid-
work. Exp. in Play Therapy is most
ntial. A car is necessary for the purposes
e appointment and if the Officer's private
is used, travelling allowances will be paid
the County Scale for the time being in
. Sal. £550-£700 (Males), £495-£560
nales). Applic., in writing, giving full de-
of qualifics., exp., and stating names of
rsons from whom refs. can be obtained,
e made to County Medical Officer, The
le, Winchester, by Sept. 30.

OUNTY of Leicester. Children Depart-
ment. Applics. invited from men or
en with suitable qualifics. for appointment
Senior Child Care Officer to act as Chief
stant to the Children Officer. Sal. £520
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travelling allowances. Post will be sub-
to Local Govt. Superann. Act, 1937, and
essful candidate will be reqd. to pass a
ical exam. Applics. should be forwarded
October 11, 1948, with names of three refs.,
ohn A. Chatterton, Clerk of the County
ncil, County Offices, Grey Friars, Leices-
(No applic. form is being issued.)

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Y.W.C.A. Sympathy with aims of the Asso-
on and exp. of appeal work essential. Sal.
£400 according to exp. Apply in writing:
onnel Secretary, Y.W.C.A. National
es, Gt. Russell St. W.C.1.

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